

Welcome to the December Edition of our newsletter!

As we reach the end of 2025, I want to take a moment to reflect on a year that has tested our resilience, sharpened our focus, and strengthened our commitment to older people across Dorset.

This winter arrives at a time of continued pressure for many in our community. Dorset has one of the oldest populations in the country, with nearly 30% of residents aged 65+. Many live on fixed incomes, face rural isolation, or live in homes that are difficult and expensive to heat. The recent Autumn Budget offers some welcome support, including the 4.8% increase to the State Pension and steps to simplify tax for digitally excluded older people, but also brings concern as frozen tax thresholds pull more older people into paying tax, and energy costs remain high for many of the people we support daily.

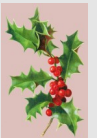
At Age UK North, South & West Dorset, our message remains clear: whatever national policy brings, we will be here. We will continue to offer free income and benefit checks, warm spaces, dementia support, social groups, home visits, and practical help to keep people safe, connected, and independent.

This year we have delivered more than 15,000 meaningful support interactions and helped secure over £1.4 million in confirmed annual benefit gains, ensuring older people in Dorset can afford essentials and maintain dignity and stability. Over the past three years, that impact totals nearly £5 million in income secured for local residents, money spent locally, sustaining households and strengthening communities.

We also received a very special message this autumn. Following the submission of our annual gratitude letter for his support of community organisations, Buckingham Palace replied:



"His Majesty The King is deeply moved by those who devote enormous amounts of their time and energy to helping people in their local community, and conveys his warmest good wishes to everyone at Age UK North, South and West Dorset."



This recognition belongs to every volunteer, every staff member, every partner, and every supporter who makes our work possible. Thank you.

This month we also held our AGM, where we marked both endings and new beginnings. My heartfelt thanks go to Simon Clifford, our outgoing Chair, whose steady leadership helped guide the charity through challenging and transformative times. Simon brought candour, integrity, and unwavering commitment to our mission. The relationship between a CEO and Chair is crucial; it can shape the culture, direction, and resilience of a charity. I am grateful for the support, challenge, and trust Simon has offered during a period of significant change.

We now welcome our new Chair, Matt Smith, Chief Officer at Weldmar Hospice. Matt brings deep experience in health, community services, and nonprofit leadership. His insight, compassion, and strategic drive will be invaluable as we continue our journey of strengthening financial sustainability, growing our services, and ensuring the voices of older people remain firmly at the heart of everything we do.

As we look forward to 2026, we do so with optimism, clarity, and determination.

We are turning the tide. We are building foundations for long-term stability. And we are doing it while remaining true to who we are: a charity rooted in kindness, expertise, and unwavering commitment to older people across Dorset.

Thank you, to our staff, volunteers, trustees, partners, supporters, and the community we serve. None of this is possible without you.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and a hopeful New Year.

Terri Lewis



Information Event

Age UK NSWSD had an information stall at the Carers Rights Day Health & Wellbeing Fair held at Wellworthy Social Club in Weymouth on the 20th November.

The event was extremely well attended and our Independent Living Co-ordinator, Hilary (pictured right), gave out lots of information leaflets and booklets.

Hilary came away with a long list of follow up work from having a host of conversations with older carers who are coping with a variety of situations in order to care for their loved ones.



WOW - Well Done Ellie



One of our Welfare Benefits Managers Ellie (pictured left) attended a community meeting at the Sturminster Colton Care home. Ellie received a referral for a 97 year old lady in the community who wanted us to look into benefits for her.

On speaking to the lady it was clear she would be eligible for Attendance Allowance (higher rate); Ellie arranged a visit and went to meet the lady to complete the AA form. Whilst she was reluctant to claim means tested benefits, Ellie gave her some rough figures as to minimum weekly amounts the government believe each person should be on and the lady laughed.

The lady has been living on £97 a week for the past 30 years (the current government minimum is £227.10). Ellie applied for AA, this will be topped up to £310 a week (due to her new Severe Disability premium of an additional minimum of £82.90 extra). In all, Ellie's visit to this lady will gain her an extra £16,816.80 a year...and that's before we even add on her full Council tax reduction!

Musical Fun

We run engaging brain training sessions across Dorset, designed for people with mild cognitive impairment, early-stage dementia, or memory loss.

Each session includes activities such as reminiscence, quizzes, and games - focusing on opinions rather than facts, so there's no such thing as a wrong answer! Many participants tell us they experience improved confidence, communication skills, mood, and overall quality of life. Most importantly, they have fun and enjoy being part of the group!

Please contact us on 01305 269444 or

wellbeingservice@ageuknswd.org.uk for more information.



01305 269444



enquiries@ageuknswd.org.uk



www.ageuk.org.uk/northsouthwestdorset



With this years wreath workshops almost underway we would like to say a huge thank you to our volunteer Louise (pictured right) Bradley and her neighbours for supporting Kathy in running all these workshops, storing all the foliage and providing her wreath making expertise. Huge thank you to Kathy for organising and delivering these marvellous workshops and Ruth Kirby, Di Harris and Lesley Ball for assisting on the day. Also a huge thank you to volunteers Ruth Kirby, Lesley Ball and Chris Pavitt who



kindly collected and donated wonderful foliage for the wreath makers to use. Another huge thank you to the National Trust at Max Gate and Thorncombe Woods, Nutley Farm Winfrith Heath and Maiden Castle Farm Dorchester for all the different foliage you donated for our wreath workshops.



This years office Christmas Tree was kindly donated by Pete Hyde Trinity Street Christmas Trees, a huge thank you for your kind generosity.



STOP Scammers Getting Through

Kathy (pictured below 2nd in from the left of the sign) spent a lovely afternoon in Beaminster talking to members of the Trefoil Society about keeping safe at home and online. The talk was a great opportunity to offer those attending a free call blocker device, funded by the Dorset Police Crime Commissioner. Kathy also talked Age UK services, including our Welfare Benefits team. Since the meeting, Kathy has installed two call blockers for Trefoil members with another installation scheduled for after Christmas.



If you would like more information on the free call blocker or would like to book an appointment for one to be fitted, please contact Kathy on 01305 269444



Handyperson Service

Our handyperson service can help with a range of DIY tasks such as, putting up shelves, installing handrails, painting and decorating, changing light fittings and much more. Prices start at £30 per hour plus a small travel fee, normally approximately £5-£10.

To find out more and to book call 01305 269444 or email handyperson@ageuknswd.org.uk

Feedback from some of our service users

Mrs S phoned HQ to pass on her thanks for great workmanship from the handyman and she would now like to book him in to help with hanging a blind and putting a photo up on the wall.

"Thank you so much for Gary's handyman service this afternoon. I will be recommending Gary to our friends as he cheerfully and efficiently completed the tasks that we needed help with."

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& West Dorset
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Handy Person Service

We Can Help With a Wide Range of Jobs

- Hanging pictures
- Putting up shelves
- Fitting door locks & Chains
- Fitting curtain rails
- Installing key safes
- Draught proofing
- External painting
- Minor repairs to furniture
- Unblocking sinks
- Replacing toilet seats
- Fitting showerheads
- Building flat pack items
- Fitting Handrails
- ...And More!

Dorchester
North Dorset
Purbecks
Weymouth

£30 Per Hour +
Travel Fee

To Find Out More & Book Call 01305 269 444
Email: handyperson@ageuknswd.org.uk



01305 269444



enquiries@ageuknswd.org.uk



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Footcare

Our expert footcare service provides gentle, professional, treatments to keep your feet healthy, comfortable, and looking their best.

Regular toenail cutting is crucial for preventing pain, infections, and complications, contributing to overall foot health. It enhances quality of life by maintaining mobility, comfort, and preventing potential health issues.

Everyone can access our services for basic nail care and treatment for corns, calluses, cracked heels, treatments for diabetics and simple in growing toenails.

We provide clinics in Dorchester, Weymouth & Sherborne covering much of the surrounding area including, Dorchester, Charminster, Bridport, Poundbury, Weymouth, Portland, Sherborne and Shaftesbury.

To book call 01305 269444 or email footcare@ageuknswd.org.uk



FOOTCARE SERVICE

Tired, aching feet?

Finding it increasingly difficult to reach your feet?

Hard or cracked skin? In growing nails?

Our expert footcare practitioners provide gentle, professional treatments to keep your feet healthy, comfortable, and looking their best.

Our Services



Initial Assessment Appointment

60 minutes- includes in-depth assessment of feet, first toenail cut, the start of any treatments and moisturising mini massage £45



Treatment Appointment

45 minutes – includes a foot health check, toenail cut, footcare treatment and moisturising mini massage £35



Toenail Cut

30 minutes – foot health check, toenail cut and moisturising mini massage £25



To Book Call:

01305 269 444

Sherborne

Weymouth

Dorchester



New Groups Coming Soon

From January 2026 we are launching several new groups at the HUB at our head office in Poundbury.

New Forget Me Not Group in Poundbury

Forget Me Nots is a support group for those living with Dementia and their carers. The group offers an opportunity to socialise and provides support for carers. There are group activities, guest speakers, warm drinks and a warm welcome.

The group starts 5th January and will meet every Monday, 1.30pm - 3pm and is £2.50 per person.

Age UK NSWD, 5 Crown Square,
Poundbury, DT1 3EN

New Forget Me Not Group in Swanage

From January 14th 2026 there will also be a new Forget Me Not Group in Swanage. It will take place on Wednesday's 10.30-12.00 at the Emmanuel Church, Victoria Avenue Swanage and cost £2.50 per person.



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Coming Soon!

Swanage Forget-Me-Not Group

Launching 14th January 2026
Wednesday's 10.30-12.00 | Emmanuel Church, Victoria Avenue Swanage | £2.50 per person

Dorchester Forget-Me-Not Group

Launching 5th January 2026
Monday's 1.30-3.00 | Age UK NSWD, Crown Square, Poundbury, DT1 3EN | £2.50 per person

Dorchester Seated Exercise Classes

Launching January 2026
Age UK NSWD, Crown Square, Poundbury, DT1 3EN | £5 per person

To register call 01305 269444 or email:
wellbeingsservice@ageuknswd.org.uk

New Seated Exercise Group in Poundbury

Exercise classes help keep you active. Regular activity and exercise can support you in maintaining balance, strength, circulation and posture.

The groups are also a fantastic opportunity to socialise with other people.

The start date is yet to be confirmed but will be in January 2026.

Classes are £5 per session and will be on a weekly basis at
Age UK NSWD, 5 Crown Square, Poundbury, DT1 3EN.

To find out more and to register for any of the groups call 01305 269444 or email wellbeingsservice@ageuknswd.org.uk



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Christmas Artistic Flare by the children at Prince of Wales First School

A huge thank you to all the children from Prince of Wales First School who entered our Christmas Card Competition. All the designs were fantastic and we had a really hard time choosing the three winners: Millie, Evelyn and Arthur, whose designs will be printed and posted to older people across the county. It was so hard to choose that we have also created a card which combines all the designs! We are sure that these bright, cheerful cards will be greatly appreciated.



Above - designed by
Millie year 4



Above - designed by
Arthur year 3



Above designed by
Evelyn year 4

Below are all the designs we received in this years competition



Your support helps us reach further and do more



Promote our charity through your own networks or newsletters



Volunteer with us as a speaker or event supporter



Invite us to speak to other groups you are part of, or a return visit



Host a fundraising event or become a sponsor



Make a one-off or regular donation

To Find Out More

Email: fundraising@ageuknswd.org.uk

Upcoming Events...

What's on in December Age UK North, South and West Dorset

5 Crown Square, Poundbury, DT1 3EN **01305 269 444**

Monday 1st	10.30-12.00 CST Referral Only	
Weds 3rd	Board Games Club 11.30- 13.00 £2.50 donation suggested	13.30-16.30 The Hub Targeted Dementia Support £25pp
Thursday 4th	10.30-12.00 Coffee Club £2.50 donation suggested	14.30-15.30 Brain Training £6pp
Wednesday 10th	Board Games Club 11.30- 13.00 £2.50 donation suggested	13.30-16.30 The Hub Targeted Dementia Support £25pp
Thurs 11th	10.30-12.00 Coffee Club £2.50 donation suggested	14.30-15.30 Brain Training £6pp
Mon 15th	10.30-12.00 CST Referral Only	Book Club 2.30- 4pm
Weds 17th	Board Games Club 11.30- 13.00 £2.50 donation suggested	13.30-16.30 The Hub Targeted Dementia Support £25pp
Thurs 18th	10.30-12.00 Coffee Club £2.50 donation suggested	14.30-15.30 Brain Training £6pp
Fri 19th	10.00-12.00 Beginner's Poetry Group £5pp Refreshments provided	

Upcoming Events...

What's on in December Age UK North, South and West Dorset

5 Crown Square, Poundbury, DT1 3EN **01305 269 444**

Mon 22nd	10.30-12.00 CST Referral Only	
Weds 24 th	Board Games Club 11.30- 13.00	13.30-16.30 The Hub Targeted Dementia Support £25pp TBC
Weds 31 st	Board Games Club 11.30 -13.00	13.30-16.30 The Hub Targeted Dementia Support £25pp TBC

Every Thursday at Castle View Care Home
Knit and Natter 2.30 pm – 4pm – lovely cake and hot drink
provided- all welcome!




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