NOVEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

THE COVERage

North, South & West Dorset ageUK
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Volunteer Celebration Evening

Behind every phone call answered, every reassuring conversation and every person who feels listened to, there's often a volunteer making it happen.

We're absolutely delighted that our wonderful Office Support Volunteers were nominated for recognition at this year's Volunteer Celebration Evening at the Dorford Centre in Dorchester!



Paul, Jan and Fiona represented the team on the night, but this recognition belongs to the whole team, including Sue, James, Viv, Dave, Judy and Georgina.

They're often the very first voice someone hears when contacting us. And when that person is worried, confused or facing a difficult situation, a little patience, kindness and reassurance can mean the world.

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Another huge congratulations to Di, nominated in the Decade of Dedication category!

From volunteer visiting to crafting and fundraising, Di has generously given her time in so many ways over the years. She was joined on the evening by fellow long-standing volunteer Hazel, who has also contributed so much through crafting, fundraising and supporting our Cognitive Stimulation Therapy sessions.

To every one of you, thank you. We're incredibly fortunate to have you on our team.

Huge thank you to Volunteer Centre Dorset for organising this event.





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No sales pitch, no forms to qualify. Just someone who will explain it.



If you have stopped heating a room, or a bill has arrived that you cannot make sense of, we can help.

Energy Confidence Dorset is a new free service from Age UK North, South & West Dorset. We are not an energy company. We have nothing to sell you, no tariff to move you onto, and nobody paying us to recommend anything. Because we are not tied to anyone, we can tell you honestly when something is worth doing - and when it is not.

There is nothing to qualify for, either. No survey to pass, no scheme to be accepted onto, no form that decides whether you are eligible enough. If you are older and you live in North, South or West Dorset, you can have this.

One of our qualified energy advisers comes to your home at a time that suits you and sits down with you.

They will go through your heating, your bills and your tariff, including that standing charge nobody ever explains properly. And they will explain it: what it means, why it is what it is, and what would actually change it. In plain English, written down, so you can read it again later or show it to your family.

Where it would make a real difference to how warm your home is, our handyperson can fit small things like draught-proofing, radiator valves and low-energy bulbs. Your adviser will talk that through with you on the visit. There is no charge.

And if what you need is something we do not do -insulation, a new boiler, help from a grant scheme for bigger work, we will tell you who does it, help you get through to the right person, and stay alongside you while it happens. Start with us and you only have to explain yourself once.

And if you have a smart meter, it gets more interesting..

It means a bad week does not go unnoticed. And it means the advice we give you in February is based on what your home is actually doing, rather than on an hour one Tuesday afternoon in November.

We know that sounds like a lot to agree to, so here is exactly how it works. Nothing is read until you have signed a form to say you are happy. You can stop at any time, without giving a reason, and nobody will mind. If you do not have a smart meter and would like one, we can help you arrange it. And if you would rather not have one at all, that is absolutely fine - everything above still applies.

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There is nothing to buy, and nothing happens without your say so. Our advisers carry Age UK identification and will always tell you when they are coming. Family, friends and carers are very welcome to phone on someone's behalf.

If anyone rings you out of the blue claiming to be from us and you are not sure, put the phone down and call us on the number below. We will never mind.





Call us, free help, no pressure on: 01305 231380

Or email a member of our friendly team via:

energyconfidence@ageuknswd.org.uk

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Welcomes & Well Wishes

There's been a lot of change across our charity recently, with some lovely new faces joining the team and others preparing to say their goodbyes. While it's always exciting to welcome new colleagues and get to know them, it's never easy to say farewell to people who have been part of our journey. In this edition, we're celebrating our new starters and sharing our very best wishes with those moving on to their next chapter.



"As I prepare for my next chapter and leave my role as Carers and Dementia Coordinator, I want to share my heartfelt thanks to this wonderful community.

To everyone who attended my groups, thank you for your time, openness and the connections we built together. To our incredible volunteers, thank you for your generosity, dedication and the huge part you play in making these groups possible.

Finally, to my wonderful teammates and frontline colleagues, thank you for the laughs, support and shared hard work. It has been a privilege to work alongside you all, and I will miss you dearly.

Thank you for making my time here so special. I wish you all the very best."

Alice



"It has been an absolute joy and privilege to work with the two groups for the last 3 years and I would like to thank everyone for their best wishes as I go back to full time education.

The Forget Me Not groups have an amazing impact in Purbeck, friendships and support are so important when living with dementia. I would like to thank everyone involved, especially the volunteers who have brought so much care, fun and laughter each week.

The Forget Me Not groups continue to meet at Wareham Rugby Club every Monday (excl Bank Holidays) from 10.30 to 12 and at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Swanage on Wednesdays from 10.30 to 12. Lots of parking and easy access to both venues. Please come along."

Lorraine



"I thoroughly enjoyed working for Age UK NSWD over the last 6 years.

I provided weekly online CST, seated exercise classes and coffee mornings as well as face-to-face groups in Portesham, Dorchester and Weymouth.

All the clients have told me how much these sessions have benefited them, and I am very sad to leave.

Classes now are on a Thursday morning at Portesham starting at 10.00am, everyone is welcome!"

Jane

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A fond farewell to Volunteer Coordinator Kathy O'Borne, who left the charity at the end of October, to pursue an exciting new opportunity with the Museum of East Dorset. We wish her well and all best of luck in her new role!



Harry Robinson
Energy & Warm Homes Adviser



Sharon Bowden
Service Administrator



Caroline Mills
Office & People Manager

Harry joins our new Energy Team, working alongside Alice Cave to provide energy advice and warm homes support to local households. He'll also be studying for his City & Guilds Level 3 in Energy Awareness.

Sharon joins our Service Administration team, supporting colleagues across our services. She'll be based on reception and answering the phones Monday to Friday, often providing the first point of contact for clients, carers and partners.

Caroline joins us in a new role overseeing the day-to-day running of our Crown Square office, including facilities, IT, health and safety, and staff support. She'll also manage our Service Administration team.

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Brain Training

Brain Training is a supportive group programme for people with mild cognitive impairment, early-stage dementia, or memory loss.



Regular attendance can improve quality of life, communication, and wellbeing. Sessions are held in small groups and focus on you, not your memory loss

Sessions held in Blandford, Gillingham, Bridport, Dorchester & Weymouth.
Coming soon to Swanage and Wareham!

£6 Per session or £35 for the 7 week course. For More Information, or to book,

Call 01305 269444

WREATH WORKSHOPS



5TH DECEMBER	10.00 - 13.00	14.00 - 16.00
6TH DECEMBER	10.00 - 13.00	14.00 - 16.00

5 Crown Square, Poundbury, DT1 3EN

£35 PER PERSON

Includes materials, embellishments & refreshments

Call 01305 269444 to book your place

FESTIVE COMMUNITY MORNING

Join Us for Live Music, Drinks & Mince Pies!

Community Centre
Liscombe Street, Poundbury
Monday 14th December
9:00am - 12:00pm

Come along and celebrate the festive season with friends, neighbours, and the local community.

Everyone welcome!



FUN QUIZ

Friday 27th November 7pm

Crossroads Tapas Bar
Crown Square
Poundbury
DT1 3JH

Teams Max 6 People

£5 per Person

(pay for 3, get 1 free)

CALL to Book 01305 269444

Email: quizinaidofdsae@btinternet.com
or: fundraising@ageuknswd.org.uk

pay on the Door, Cash or Card

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The Big Knit 2026

Where there's wool, there's a way! The much-loved innocent Big Knit campaign has returned, and Age UK North, South and West Dorset, in partnership with innocent drinks, is calling on the knitting ninjas of Dorset to wield their needles and help make a big difference to the lives of older people.

The popular campaign sees the nation's crafters come together to knit little hats for innocent smoothie bottles. For every behatted smoothie sold, Age UK North, South and West Dorset receives 30p, providing crucial support to older people both nationally and locally to help them live well.



We already have nearly 1000 hats, so look set to smash our target of 2000 by next October. You can find more information and patterns here: https://www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise/the-big-knit/ or knit with us at our monthly craft session on the final Friday of the month at our Poundbury hub.

Email fundraising@ageuknswd.org.uk, for more information.

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What a lovely group at Somerleigh Court!

Week in, week out, the residents of Somerleigh Court turn up with smiles on their faces, ready to take part in our seated exercise class. Together, we work on improving muscle strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular fitness in a fun, friendly, and supportive environment.

It's wonderful to see everyone enjoying the session, building confidence, staying active, and sharing plenty of laughter along the way. We meet every Thursday at 2:00pm at Somerleigh Court.

Age UK North, South & West Dorset is proud to support residents staying active, connected, and enjoying healthy ageing within their community.



Pictured: Somerleigh Court residents

with Community and Wellbeing Manager Debbie Ball

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A Wonderful Day of Connection at The Tank Museum, Bovington

Last month, Age UK North, South and West Dorset enjoyed a fantastic day at The Tank Museum in Bovington, attending an event that brought together a number of local charities and community organisations. It was a pleasure to meet so many dedicated people and learn more about the incredible work being carried out across Dorset to support local communities.

The event provided a valuable opportunity to network, share ideas and celebrate the positive impact that charities and voluntary organisations make every day. We were inspired by the passion, commitment and innovation shown by everyone involved.

As well as enjoying the fascinating surroundings of The Tank Museum, the event offered a chance to build new connections and explore opportunities for future collaboration. Events such as these remind us of the strength of partnership working and the importance of supporting one another to achieve the best outcomes for the people we serve.

Thank you to the organisers for hosting such a valuable event. It was a pleasure meeting everyone, and we look forward to building on these connections and continuing to make a difference across Dorset.







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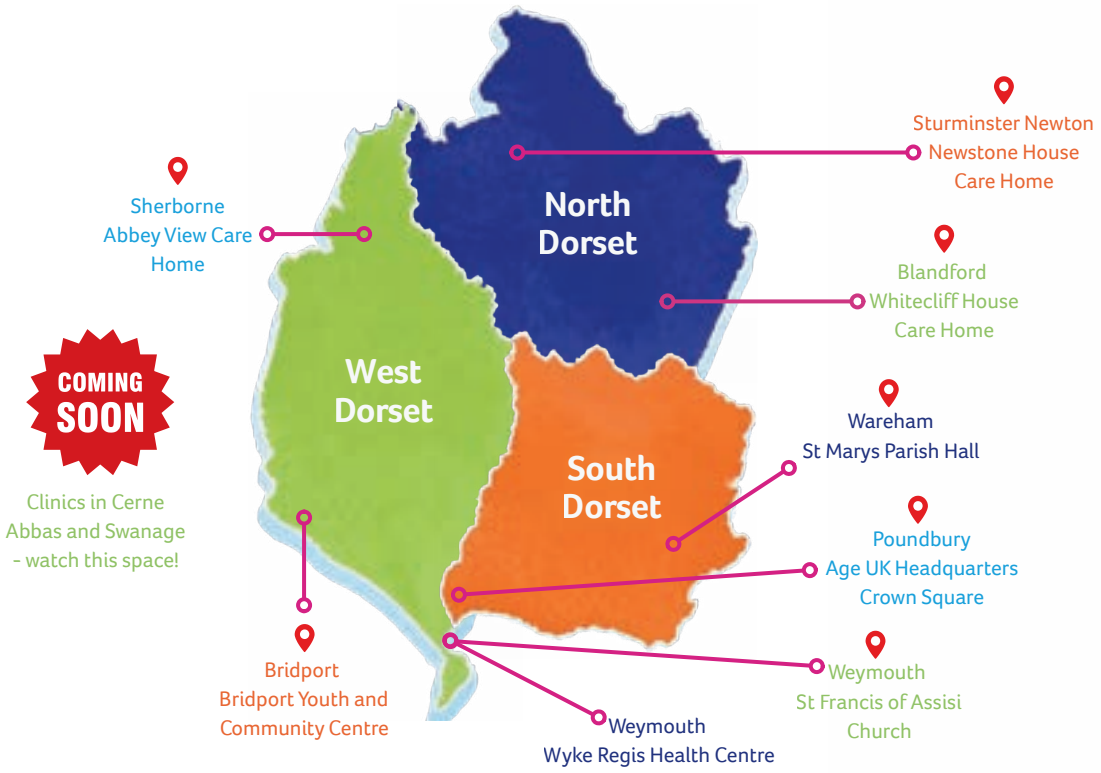
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Footcare Focus

Firstly, we are delighted to share that Lisa has been promoted from Footcare Team Leader to Footcare Manager. This recognises the additional responsibilities Lisa has taken on, her continued commitment to the service and the important role she plays in its day-to-day management and ongoing development. Lisa has worked incredibly hard, and this is a well-deserved recognition of the contribution she makes to the charity. Please join us in congratulating her!



We are delighted to share that the Foot Care service has now expanded to 8 locations across North, South and West Dorset:



If you feel there is a need for a footcare service in another area, please contact us on 01305 269444 and leave a message for Lisa Ismaili, Foot Care Manager

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Cycling Without Age

A huge thank you to Cycling Without Age for bringing so much joy to our community. Their wonderful trishaw rides give people of all ages and abilities the chance to get out and about, meet others, and feel more connected.







It was lovely to welcome Cycling Without Age to our coffee morning and to our Dementia Day Service last month. Everyone who enjoyed a trishaw ride from the Hub on Crown Street, Poundbury, had a fantastic time, with plenty of smiles all round!

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Join Our Friendly Volunteer Team

Last month, we were delighted to welcome a new group of volunteers to The Hub in Poundbury for their induction training.



The session provided an introduction to Age UK North, South & West Dorset, including a brief history of the charity, guidance on recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns, and an overview of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

More importantly, it was a fantastic opportunity for everyone to get to know one another. Volunteers worked together on a safeguarding scenario, sharing ideas and learning from each other's experiences. They also took part in our "Identity Iceberg" activity, which encouraged thoughtful discussion about the assumptions and stereotypes we can all make, helping us better understand and appreciate the diverse experiences of others.

Volunteering is about so much more than giving your time. It's an opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills, build confidence, and make a real difference in your local community.

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If you've ever thought about volunteering, we'd love to hear from you.

Whether you can spare a few hours a week or a little more, there's a place for you in our friendly and supportive team.

Come and be part of something meaningful. Together, we can help older people stay connected, active and supported in our community.

For more information about volunteering opportunities, contact our team today via 01305 269444

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Thank You to DAPTC Autumn Conference

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone involved in delivering the DAPTC (Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils) Autumn Conference.

It was a fantastic opportunity to come together, share ideas, learn from one another, and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing our communities. And to support Age Friendly Dorset in making Dorset a place where growing older means living better. The event was informative, inspiring, and exceptionally well organised.





Thank you to all the speakers, exhibitors, and attendees for making the day so valuable. We left with new insights, strengthened connections, and plenty of ideas to take forward in our work.

We appreciate all the hard work that went into making the conference such a success and look forward to future events.

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Age Friendly Ambassadors

In last month's newsletter, we discussed the Age Friendly Dorset Ambassador programme – and they're still looking for people to get involved!





Anyone, of any age, can become an Age Friendly Ambassador, and it's completely free to join. By signing up, you can help make Dorset a more age-friendly place for everyone to live, work and thrive.

Why not become an Ambassador today and help make a difference in your community? For more information and to get involved, visit:

https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/en/age-friendly-dorset

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Thank You for a Wonderful Community Event

Last month, Age UK North, South & West Dorset had the pleasure of attending a fantastic community event at the Volunteers Centre Dorset, Dorford Centre, Dorchester.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone involved in organizing and supporting the event. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet with other local charities, community groups, and organizations, all working hard to make a positive difference across Dorset.

The event provided a valuable chance to share ideas, learn more about the incredible services available in our local communities, and build new connections. It was inspiring to hear about the wide range of support being offered and to see so many organizations coming together with a shared commitment to helping others.

A special thank you to Volunteers Centre Dorset for hosting such a welcoming and informative event. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone and finding out more about the great work taking place throughout the county. Events like these highlight the strength of partnership working and the importance of community collaboration. We look forward to continuing to work alongside local organizations to support older people and communities across Dorset.



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Land Registry event

Last month, the Land Registry in Weymouth hosted an informal lunchtime charity information event for their staff to find out about what's available locally for them, their relatives and friends.

Our Independent Living Co-ordinator, Hils, went along with lots of information about our services.

Hils said:

"It was really well attended by the staff during their lunch hour with several potential new referrals for our welfare benefits, home support and independent living services. I think it would be a good idea for other organisations to hold similar lunchtime events".



Pictured: Hilary Foggo, Age UK NSWD Independent Living Co-ordinator

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Dorset Fire and Rescue Visit to Our Coffee Club

On behalf of everyone at Age UK North, South & West Dorset, we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to the Fire Safety Team for taking the time to visit our Coffee Club and deliver such an informative and engaging talk.





Our members thoroughly enjoyed the session and found the advice on fire safety both valuable and reassuring. The information shared will help many people feel more confident about staying safe in their homes and knowing what to do in an emergency.

Thank you for your professionalism, friendly approach, and willingness to answer questions from our members. Your visit was greatly appreciated, and it was wonderful to see everyone so engaged throughout the talk.

We are very grateful for your support and for helping our community stay safe.

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Energy Confidence Dorset FAQs

You may remember from our October issue that we announced the launch of Energy Confidence Dorset.

Our Energy Confidence team, Alice and Harry, have since put together a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) to help explain what the service offers, how it works and how it can support people across Dorset.

What is Energy Confidence Dorset?

Energy Confidence Dorset is a free service for older people in North, South and West Dorset. A trained energy support worker from Age UK North, South & West Dorset helps you keep your home warm, understand your bills, and feel more confident about your heating. It runs for 18 months from autumn 2026 and is delivered by Age UK North, South & West Dorset, working with LDS Consultancy, a technology firm based in the Southwest.

Who can we help?

Older people who live in the North, South and West Dorset Areas. This includes, but not limited to: Dorchester, Weymouth, Portland, Bridport, Sherborne, Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury and the villages around them.

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How can we help?

There are three ways we can help. Each is optional and saying no to one does not mean you can't have other help we offer. All of these options are free to you.

1) Energy Advice

We can offer advice on energy saving, energy usage, if you are on the best tariff available, if you are signed up to any discount schemes you may be eligible for and ensure you are using your current heating systems efficiently.

2) Energy Efficiency Measures

We can provide and fit energy efficiency measures to help within your home. This could be things like draught proofing, energy saving lightbulbs and TRV's (individual radiator valves) - These will be fitted by Simon, our handyperson. The need for these will be assessed by Harry, our energy advisor, at a home assessment.

3) Energy Monitoring

If you agree, we can monitor your energy usage through your smart meter. This can help you ensure that you are using your energy in the most efficient way and at the most efficient times. It can also give you and your loved one's extra peace of mind as we can identify a change in energy usage and habits, again with your consent and you can stop at any time.

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What happens on a home visit?

An energy advisor will arrange a time that suits you and come to your home. They will carry Age UK identification, and you are welcome to call us to check before you let them in.

The visit usually takes about an hour. They will look at your heating controls and thermostat, your windows, doors and lighting, talk through how you use your heating, and suggest simple changes. If small improvements would help, they can arrange for our handyperson to fit them on a later visit. Nothing is done without your say so.

What do I need to do?

If you are interested or would like more information, you can contact us via:

https://www.energy-confidence.co.uk/

Call us on 01305 231380

energyconfidence@ageuknswd.org.uk

Age UK North, South & West Dorset, Units 1 and 2, 5 Crown Square, Dorchester, DT1 3EN

Activity & Social Sessions

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Forget Me Not Group			
For carers and service users			
Wareham	Wareham Rugby Club	Mon 10.30 - 12	£2.50 per person (RN)
Swanage	Emmanuel Baptist Church	Wed 10.30 - 12	£2.50 per person (RN)
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Mon 13.30 - 15.00	£2.50 per person (SB)

Seated Exercise			
Gentle movement to music			
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Tue 13.30-14.15	£5 per session (RC)
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Thur 13.00-13.45	£5 per session (RC)
Charlton Down	Chestnut Court	Thurs 15.45-17.00	Residents Only (LS)
Stalbridge	Village Hall	Tue 12.00-12.45	£5 per session (SW)
Dorchester	Glencairn House	Tue 14.00-14.45	£5 per session (LS)
Portesham	Village Hall	Thurs 10.00-10.45	£5 per session (RC)

Activity & Social Sessions

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Seated Exercise continued			
Gentle movement to music			
Dorchester	Somerleigh Crt	Thur 14.00-14.45	Residents Only (DB)

Dementia Day Service			
Sessions designed for those potentially with Dementia / respite for carers			
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Weds 13.30-16.30	£25 per session (RC)

Brain Training			
Designed to improve cognitive functions—such as memory, attention and problem-solving			
Bridport	Bridport Youth Centre	Tue 11.00-12.00	£6 per session (RC)
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Thurs 14.30-15.30	£6 per session (RC)
Blandford	British Legion	Thurs 11.30-12.30	£6 per session (SW)
Weymouth	The Acorns	Weds 13.30-14.30	£6 per session (SB)
Weymouth	Bethany Hall	Tue 15.00-15-45	£6 per session (RC)

Activity & Social Sessions

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Coffee Club			
Opportunity to socialise and meet new people			
HQ	Poundbury	Thurs 10.30-12.00	£2.50 per person (RN)
HQ	Poundbury	Weds 11.30-13.00	£2.50 per person (DB)

Other Groups			
Coffee/Games Club	HQ - Poundbury	Wed 11.30-13.00 (DB)	£2.50
Book-Club	3rd Monday of each month	Mon 3.15-4.45 (NW)	£2.50

To book, please call 01305 269 444 or email us via

wellbeingservice@ageuknswd.org.uk