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Bridport Blind Club

Our Welfare Benefits team is often out and about talking to community groups and residents in supported living accommodation. The team raise awareness of our services in general and Welfare Benefits in particular.

Building trust in the community is a really important part of what we do.

Sometimes a contact made at an event like this can be the very first step in unlocking a wealth of benefit entitlements for someone who would otherwise have been reluctant, or unable to claim for themselves. Once we start a conversation we are ready and willing to support people to claim by visiting them at home or whatever else is needed.

Earlier in the month, Judith Pearce, Welfare Benefits Manager gave a talk to the Bridport Blind Club. She was able to answer both general questions and give more personal advice to members and had a lovely chat with a colleague from Dorset Blind Association, which will strengthen our delivery of help to mutual clients.

Please let us know if you would like us to come along to a group you are part of.

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Good Neighbour Volunteers

Could you do with some help? During 2025, Good Neighbours visited 50 people!

- Our volunteers can carry out 'one off' task requests in your home if you have nobody else to help you.
- Tasks can be anything from changing a lightbulb, to putting up curtains, or to erecting a new rotary clothes line.
- **The service covers the Dorchester and Weymouth areas only.**
- We do not charge but suggest a £3 minimum donation to contribute towards the administration costs.
- **Nobody will just turn up at your home. Arrangements will be made and you will know the name of the volunteer visiting you. Tell us about your task via 01305 269444 and if Good Neighbours can help, they will!**

Please note that this is not an emergency service, thank you.

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The charity behind the name

A message from Terri Lewis, Chief Executive

Not long ago, at an event, someone said something to me that I hear more often than you might think. “You’re Age UK- you must be all right for money.”

I understood exactly why they said it. But I would like to use this opportunity to gently set the record straight, because the truth matters, and because it changes what your support means.

We are our own charity

Age UK North, South & West Dorset is an independent local charity. We have our own board of trustees, our own staff, our own accounts and our own registered charity number: 1142519. We have been here, alongside older people in this county, for more than 65 years. We are governed here and accountable here, and every decision about what we do and who we help is taken here in Dorset.

We are not funded by anyone else

We receive no core funding from the national charity whose name we currently share. Not a penny of it. Everything we do, the benefits adviser sitting at someone’s kitchen

table, the home support worker who makes it possible to stay at home, the footcare clinic, the handyperson, the dementia and carer groups, the wellbeing activities — is paid for by money we raise ourselves: local donations, grants we apply for and win, and modest fees for some of our services.

Last year our welfare benefits service alone secured more than £2 million in additional income for older people in Dorset, roughly £25 back for every £1 it costs to run. Across all our services we support around 3,500 older people a year, with about 35 staff and more than 150 volunteers. That is what local support buys.

And the shops on the high street are not ours

This is the one that surprises people most. If you donate a bag of clothes to a shop bearing the name we share, or buy something from one, that money does not come to us. Those shops are not ours — we have no retail arm at all. I say that with no ill feeling towards anyone. I would simply rather you knew, so you can choose where your generosity lands.

The number to remember: 1142519

The same is true of gifts left in wills, and this is the point I would most like you to take away. Legacies are a lifeline to charities like ours. But a will that says only "to Age UK" does not reach Dorset.

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If you would like your gift to stay here, looking after your neighbours, please ask your solicitor to name our registered charity number: 1142519. That number is ours alone. It belongs to no one else, and it will not change, whatever else does. It is the surest way to make sure a gift meant for Dorset arrives in Dorset.

More from us in the year ahead

Over the coming year you will hear us talking rather more about who we are and telling our own story more clearly and more confidently than we have in the past. There is nothing to be concerned about: the services you know will carry on exactly as they are, delivered by the same people. But it has come to matter to us that people can see us for what we actually are- a Dorset charity, run from Dorset, for older people in Dorset. I will have more to say about that as the year goes on.

If you take one thing from this

When you give to us, you are not topping up a national organisation's budget. You are paying for an hour of a befriender's time in a village a long way from anywhere. You are keeping our phones answered. You are keeping an adviser in the chair when someone needs to know what they are entitled to.

So if you would like to help, by giving, by volunteering, or by remembering us in your will, please do it directly. Thank you, as ever, for standing with us.

01305 269444 enquiries@ageuknswd.org.uk www.ageuk.org.uk/northsouthwestdorset

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Working with the Police and Crime Commissioner to keep older people safe

We continue to work closely with the Office of the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner and Dorset Police to help keep older people across the county safe.

Our Chief Executive, Terri Lewis, recently met with Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner David Sidwick to discuss the growing threat of fraud, including the increasingly sophisticated ways criminals are using artificial intelligence to make scams more convincing and harder to recognise.

Fraud remains one of the crimes most likely to affect older people, yet it is also significantly under-reported. That makes prevention, awareness and practical support especially important. One way we are helping is through our Older Safer project, which includes the provision of free call blocker devices to eligible older residents across North, South and West Dorset.

Call blockers sit alongside the telephone and screen incoming calls, helping stop nuisance and scam callers from getting through while allowing calls from family, friends and trusted services to reach you as normal.

For many people, the difference is more than practical. It can bring real peace of mind and help make the telephone feel safe to answer again.

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The devices are supplied and fitted free of charge by our trained Good Neighbour volunteers, thanks to funding from the Office of the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner and our partnership with Dorset Police.

You may be eligible if you live alone, live with a long-term health condition, have memory difficulties or a diagnosis of dementia, are considered vulnerable, or have previously been a victim of fraud.

To ask about a call blocker for yourself or someone you know, call 01305 269444 or email enquiries@ageuknswd.org.uk.



Pictured: Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner David Sidwick during a recent visit to our Poundbury office.

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Summer of Shows





From Dorset County to Melplash, our very own Community and Wellbeing Manager, Debbie Ball, has had a busy summer visiting a fantastic variety of agricultural shows across our local area.



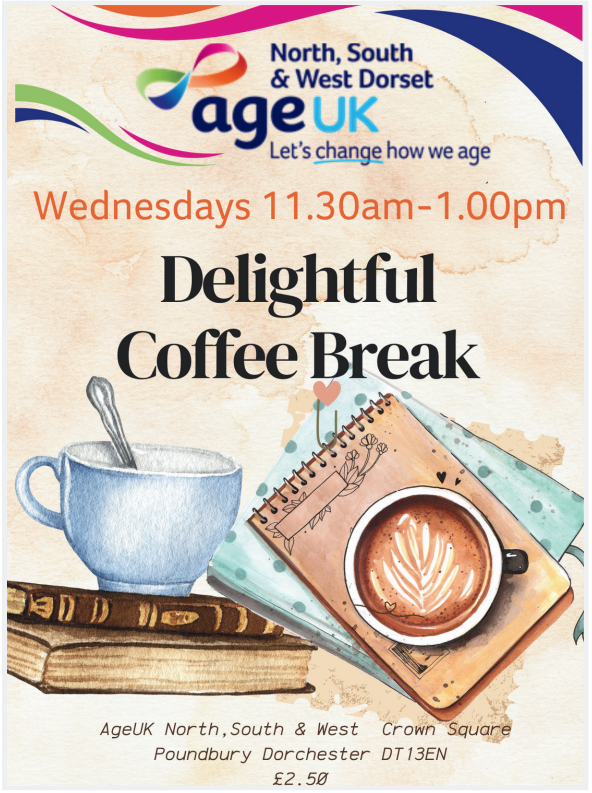
A big thank you to everyone who stopped by our stand, said hello and took the time to chat with us. It's always a pleasure to meet and connect with our local community!



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Help make Dorset a great place to grow older

Our CEO, Terri Lewis, has recently taken on the role of Chair of Age Friendly Dorset, the countywide partnership working to make Dorset one of the best places in the country to grow older.

It is a natural fit with our work at Age UK North, South and West Dorset and gives us an important opportunity to help shape how communities, organisations and services across the county think about and respond to ageing.

There is good reason for Dorset to lead the way. Around 29% of Dorset residents are aged 65 and over, compared with around 19% across England, giving us one of the oldest populations in the country. Last September, Dorset also became the 100th community in the country to be recognised as age-friendly by the Centre for Ageing Better, something to be proud of, and to build on.

Become an Age Friendly Ambassador

One of the easiest ways to get involved is to become an Age Friendly Ambassador. Ambassadors can be any age and from any background. It is a light and entirely voluntary role, with Ambassadors receiving some introductory training, a badge and regular updates. In return, they help champion age-friendly thinking in their communities, workplaces and networks, challenge outdated attitudes towards ageing and help make sure older people's voices are heard.

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There is no set time commitment- Ambassadors can be involved as much or as little as suits them.

And there is another reason to join now. This October, Age Friendly Dorset will hold its first annual Celebrating Our Ambassadors event, bringing Ambassadors from across Dorset together to celebrate progress, make connections and look ahead to what comes next.

If you would like to become an Age Friendly Ambassador and be part of making Dorset an even better place to grow older, email agefriendlyambassador@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.

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Welcome to the team!



Hello, I'm Sophie Harrison-Light, and I'm delighted to have recently joined Age UK North, South & West Dorset as the new Marketing & Communications Officer. I'm really looking forward to getting to know the team and hearing about the fantastic work, people and stories that make such a difference across our organisation.

Your stories, successes, events and experiences are incredibly important — they help us celebrate the impact of Age UK North, South & West Dorset and share the brilliant work happening every day.

If you have a story or something you'd love to share with us, please get in touch at communications@ageuknswd.org.uk. I work Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 9am–3pm, and I can't wait to hear from you!

As our footcare clinics grow, so does our team! We're delighted to welcome Lindsay to Age UK North, South & West Dorset. With new clinics opening across Dorset this October, Lindsay joins us to help even more people keep their feet healthy, comfortable and well cared for. A huge welcome, Lindsay, we're so pleased to have you on board! Now taking bookings for Sherborne, Weymouth (Wyke Regis), Weymouth (Littlemoor), Poundbury, Bridport, Blandford Forum, Sturminster Newton.



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Have Your Say on the Future of Policing in Dorset

The Government is consulting on proposals that would change how policing is structured and governed across England and Wales. Among the changes being considered are a new national police service, a review of whether smaller forces such as Dorset should be merged into larger regional ones, and changes to how local policing is held to account.

Dorset's Police and Crime Commissioner has opened a public survey so that residents can give their views before decisions are taken. We welcome the decision to ask Dorset residents directly.

We are sharing it because older people in our area have a particular stake in the outcome. Neighbourhood policing, rural crime, and the response to doorstep and telephone fraud matter a great deal to the people we work alongside, and older residents are too often the least consulted when decisions of this scale are made.

We are not suggesting how anyone should answer. We would simply encourage you to take part.

The survey is open to anyone living in Dorset and takes only a few minutes:
www.dorset.pcc.police.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/police-reform-survey

DORSET
POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER
DAVID SIDWICK

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Footcare

Expert footcare, closer to home

New Age UK clinics opening across Dorset this October, for anyone aged 18 and over.

New from October

- **Bridport** from Wed 7 Oct
- **Blandford Forum** from Wed 7 Oct
- **Sturminster Newton** from Tue 13 Oct
- **Weymouth (Littlemoor)** from Tue 13 Oct

Also at

Dorchester (Poundbury) · Weymouth (Wyke Regis) · Sherborne

Appointments from £25 · Anyone aged 18+

Book now: 01305 269 444

www.ageuk.org.uk/northsouthwestdorset

For an additional £5 we can add on fingernail cutting too!

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Can you spare a couple of hours a week to support older people in your community?

We are looking for a volunteer to support our Cognitive Stimulation group at the Acorns Day Centre in Weymouth on Wednesday mornings, from 10.15 - 12.15. This is a structured course for people with a dementia diagnosis. It is a fun, friendly group. You will be supporting a Wellbeing Facilitator, helping to set up, meet and greet clients and join in activities. No experience necessary- full training given and fuel expenses paid.



Phone Kathy on 01305 231 382

or email volunteerenquiries@ageuknswd.org.uk for more info.

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Could you be our Christmas wreath-maker?

Our wreath-making mornings are a real Christmas highlight- and they do double good...

In care homes and community centres, they bring creativity, company and festive cheer to older people; and our ticketed sessions raise vital funds for the work we do supporting older people all year round. Either way, it's an event full of Christmas spirit.

This year we have everything ready to go, the venues, the foliage and materials, the refreshments, and our team all on hand. We're just missing one thing: a skilled wreath-maker to guide the crafting. That's it. No planning, no admin, no fuss. Just you, your festive know-how and a few hours that make a real difference. One session or a few, whatever suits you.







If that sounds like you (or someone you know!), we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch: fundraising@ageuknswd.org.uk

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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 (LS)
Swanage	Emmanuel Baptist Church	Wed 10.30 - 12	£2.50 per person (LS)
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Mon 13.30 - 15.00	£2.50 per person (SB)

Pilates Classes			
For carers and service users			
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Tues 12-12.45	£6 per session (RN)
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Thurs 9.15 - 10	£6 per session (RN)

Seated Exercise			
Gentle movement to music			
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Tues 13.30	£6 per session (RN)
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Thurs 9.15 - 10	£6 per session (RN)

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Seated Exercise continued			
Gentle movement to music			
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	Tue 13.00-13.45	£5 per session (JW)
Dorchester	Somerleigh Crt	Thur 14.00-14.45	Residents Only DB)
Online	-------	Thur 10.00-11.00	£4 per session (JW)

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

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 (AD)

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Brain Training continued			
Designed to improve cognitive functions such as memory, attention and problem-solving			
Dorchester	HQ - Poundbury	Thurs 14.30-15.30	£6 per session (AD)
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 15.45 – 16.45	£6 per session (DB)

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

Other Groups			
Wellbeing Walking Club	HQ - Poundbury	Fri 09.30-10.30 (DB) From end of Sept	£5

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Other Groups continued			
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 (KOB)	£2.50

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

wellbeingservice@ageuknswd.org.uk