***Staff member celebrates over twenty years with Age UK Exeter***

**Karen Brooks: Enabling and Marketing Manager**

**July 2024**

A person holding a bouquet of flowers

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**What made you want to work for Age UK Exeter (AUKE)?**

*Twenty years ago, Karen was made redundant from her role in the civil service and happened to see a postcard in the window of our previous Cowick Street office advertising for a coordinator for the Sitting and Escort service. She thought this would be something new to try at the time and never imagined she would still be loving her role at AUKE twenty years later.*

**What does your role involve?**

*Karen is Enabling and Marketing Manager and a part of the Senior Management Team. She manages the enabling and home support team, events and marketing opportunities, and helps lead the charity as part of the Senior Management Team.*

**What does a day in the life of you at work look like?**

*Karen manages the enabling service and is very much part of the team that ensures clients get the service they deserve. Karen said, “The clients will always be the priority for me.” It’s a very adaptable role, no day is the same.*

**Has the role changed at all since you’ve been in post?**

*Karen started in a more administrative role, coordinating the enabling service and meeting clients. She has seen the social care environment change over the years, and has adapted to changes, as has the service. Karen’s marketing and management role now looks at the wider organisation, including strategic vison, marketing, events, recruitment and senior management.*

**What do you like about your role?**

*No day is like the next. It is full of variety. Karen said, “I love my job, I seriously love my job, even though it can be quite demanding.”*

**What are the challenges?**

*Karen noted that recruitment can be a challenge in the social care sector, but there is a definite need for the service, the demand is always there. Karen said, “I take great pride in the quality of the service and the feedback we always get.”*

**What would you like to see develop?**

*Karen would love to see more support for older people, especially around dementia support. She would also love to see the charity have a larger visible presence in the city again. She noted how many people still miss our past premises that was very accessible and visible to the local community.*

**What three words would you say describe AUKE?**

*“Caring, reliable, friendly.”*

**And what would you like people to know about AUKE?**

*“That we’re a charity for the over-50’s and we’re very much still here!”*

**And finally, what difference do you think the charity makes in the city?**

*Karen said, “I’d like to think we make a huge difference. Being able to offer face to face services again after the pandemic is huge. Feedback is often so good, illustrating that the home support service makes people’s lives that bit more manageable. One of our home support workers was recently described by a client as a ‘tower of strength’ and that is what we are here for.”*