

User Forum 23/11 Meeting Notes:

Introduction: The main questions: What more can we do to support you to age well? Are you making the most out of this chapter in your life? What can Age UK Exeter do to help?

Transport and accessibility in Exeter:

- NHS transport can be hard/patchy to get hold of. Lack of access to community transport prevents people from doing things.
- Buses: Out of Exeter Bus service is not great. Have to get a taxi when going out of town, and if not, you can be stuck when heading somewhere with no bus route. It's hard to get a bus if you're less able.
- Age UK Exeter has no vehicles.
- Community transport Devon-wide; being out of Exeter it's such a patchy service. Connecting people and transport is really important- needs to be a much better service throughout the county.
- *It is easier to get into town than here. We used to do monthly things in town (St Stevens' Church). Perhaps restart this in the future as a Health and wellbeing hub for over 50s, and involve other agencies: mind, Devon carers etc. Themes each time.*

Digitalisation and Information Accessibility:

- It can be a struggle to book activities/events to do because the process is online. This can make you reliant on friends and family, thus losing independence and confidence.
- Not everyone wants to have to use a tablet/phone. Not using technology needs to become more acceptable.
- Would a one-stop-shop for information help? Devon Council do something similar.
- Advice: can go to the citizens advice bureau for help with power of attorney or advice for disabled people, people with a dementia. Anything to do with government you have to go online.
- We have information and advice service; we need funding to get more staff as the service is very busy.
- *Propose a place to walk into in the city centre to offer information and advice.*
- Financial advice and will making. Lots of solicitors in Exeter who offer this at a low-ish cost.
- Over 500 charities supporting older people in Devon. Too many, can be overwhelming. Gather information in one place.

Health and wellbeing:

- Activities and group work: Age UK Exeter to run arts and crafts where you can learn a skill or do something a bit different and fun. Our existing craft group you typically bring own work and get on with it. Need a led craft group. Take back to craft group lead.
- Counselling: We have a bid in for some funding to pay for a counsellor to set up here.
- Set up noticeboard in the Sycamores room.

Some positive notes:

- Sycamore days respite service: Started one day a week. Hope to go up to three after Christmas and four in April! The interaction with multiple other people instead of just one other makes a huge positive impact.
- Our Information and Advice project supported over 600 people in the last year and has successfully achieved over £75,000 worth of benefits to support older people be more independent. This is an unfunded project and completely free to clients.