



# Age UK Exeter Impact Report 2024-2025

Working with older people:  
changing how we age.





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# Welcome

In 2024-25, Age UK Exeter stood beside hundreds of older people across the city, not simply to offer support, but to witness and respond to the many ways in which people continue to shape their own lives, often against difficult odds.

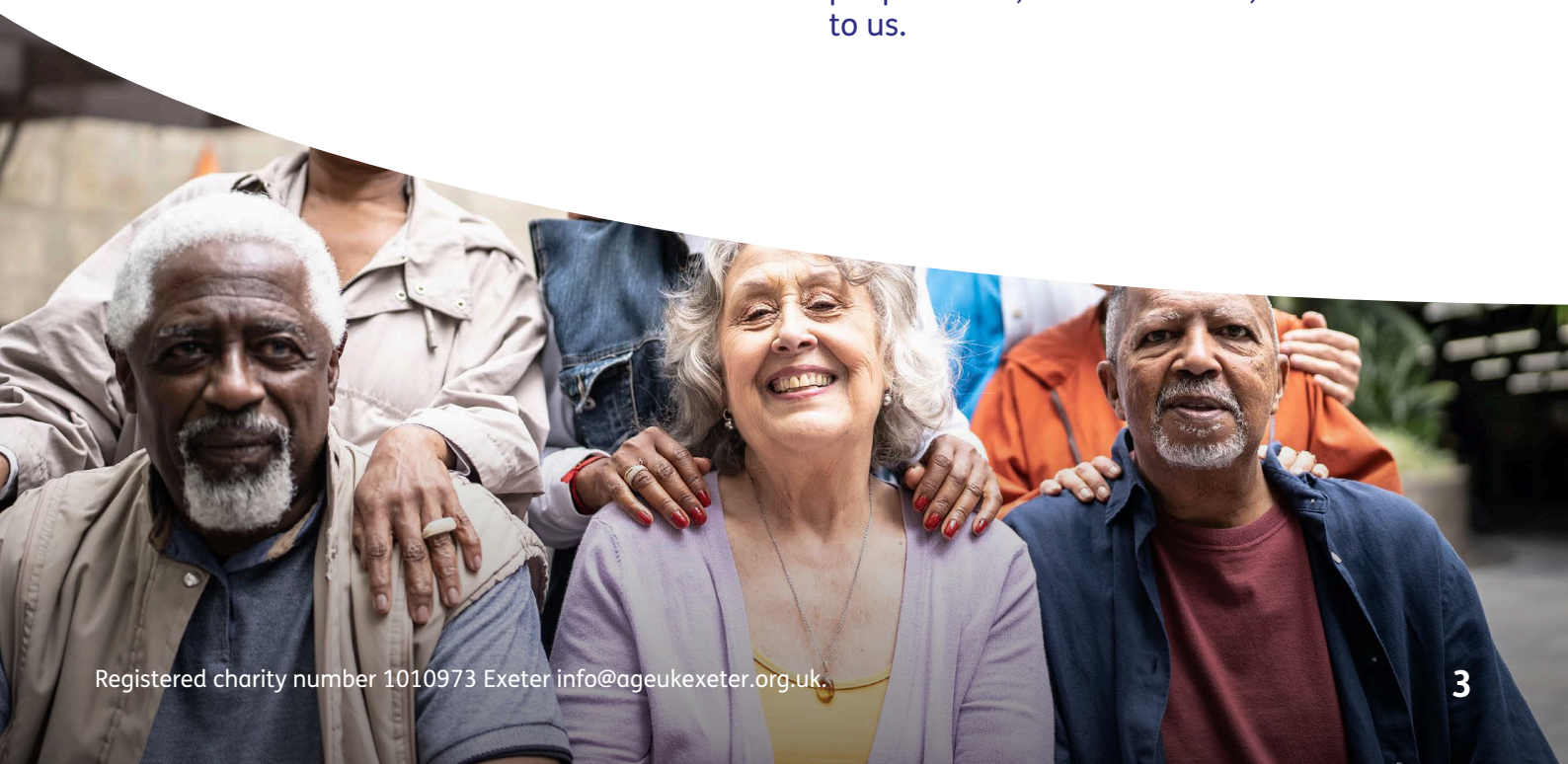
We see this in the case studies included in this report. Case studies that include intellectual exploration, care, fun, and wrap-around support.

At the core of our work lies a simple, yet vital commitment: to act with, not for, older people. Our role is not just to inspire transformation, but to support the ground on which people already stand. We work alongside carers who give so much of themselves, and individuals navigating isolation, digital exclusion, grief, or uncertainty, each carrying stories, strengths, and aspirations of their own.

This year's report is not only a showcase of outcomes. It is a reflection, of relationships, and the everyday acts that quietly sustain people's sense of self and belonging.

In the words of our CEO: **“Age UK Exeter is about empowering over 50's to live life to the full. To view age positively. Our services are aimed at supporting people through the ageing journey and meet them where they are. 33% of people in Exeter are over the age of 50, so we have a big remit and really do want to make a difference.”**

We invite you to read what happened this year, not only in what we did, but in what people chose, carried forward, and offered to us.



# A message from our CEO, Nicky Flynn

Every day we hear stories in the news about the challenges facing our older community across Exeter – from the soaring cost of living, stretched health and social care services, to the growing issue of loneliness and isolation. These headlines can feel overwhelming, but at Age UK Exeter, we see beyond the statistics. We see the individuals whose lives are directly affected here in our own community.

Our team is rooted in Exeter. With local staff and volunteers by the side of thousands of older people and their families, we provide practical help, life-enhancing activities, and vital enabling. None of this would be possible without the extraordinary generosity of supporters, volunteers, and partners who stand alongside us.

This past year your support has enabled us to make a real difference: from ensuring the running of our hospital home service, Sycamore Days service, community exercise, music and craft groups, to our handy person and enabling services to creating community spaces where people can come together, share a meal, and feel connected again.

In the pages of this Impact Report, you will find the stories from our community: everyday moments of kindness, resilience, real world impact and joy. Stories like Julia who achieved something they never thought they could through our Enabling and Home Support Service; Ann, who found belonging after losing their husband through volunteering in our Daycare; and the many volunteers and staff who have found purpose and community through our community work.

On behalf of all of us at Age UK Exeter, a big thank you to all our donors and supporters. Your generosity, time, and compassion ensure that later life in Exeter is not defined by loneliness or hardship, but by dignity, purpose, and connection. Together, we are building a community where everyone can thrive and make the most of later life.



**Nicky Flynn**  
Chief Executive,  
Age UK Exeter





# Year in numbers 2024 - 2025

**33%**

of people in Exeter are  
over the age of 50

2021 census

We averaged

**2800**

contacts per month with  
older people, supporting  
them in their day to day life



**“I feel I am valued  
and known by those  
around me”**

Enabling client



People in  
Exeter have  
below the  
national levels  
of health for  
dementia and  
anxiety

2021 census

We supported

**580**

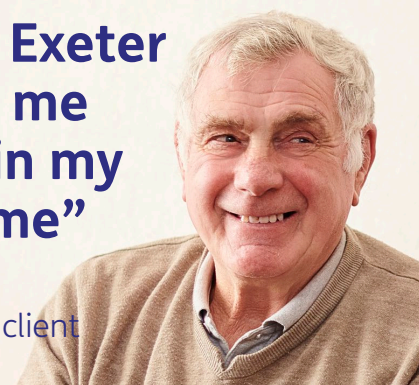
older adults with information  
and advice

**Health**

was the chief concern of our  
2024 survey respondents

**“AgeUK Exeter  
enables me  
to stay in my  
own home”**

Enabling and  
Handyperson client





# What do our numbers really say?

We have reported our numbers in terms of clients engaged per project. The result is a transparent account of our reach for the past year - rooted in the number of individuals who we supported, not how many times we engaged. Figures are for July 2024 - July 2025 unless stated otherwise.

Service area	Number of Individual clients	Source file
Information & Advice (I&A)	<b>580</b>	Charitylog (June 2024 - June 2025 as per interview)
Hospital to Home	<b>600</b>	Performance Indicator Results (PIR) April 2024 - End of March 2025)
Volunteer Visiting	<b>139</b>	Charitylog
Enabling & Home Support	<b>354</b>	Charitylog
Daycare	<b>86</b>	Charitylog
Budding Friends	<b>27</b>	Charitylog
Handyperson	<b>285</b>	Charitylog

All supported by

**51**

dedicated staff

**7**

trustees

**99**

wonderful  
volunteers

This resulted in  
an average of

**2800**

contacts per month



# Stories of impact

**These stories are not about what we did, they are about what people chose, created, and carried forward.**

Across Exeter, older adults continue to shape their lives with determination, creativity, and care. Whether seeking intellectual fulfilment, rediscovering purpose after loss, or finding strength in shared moments, their experiences remind us that dignity is not delivered, it is lived. Each story here reflects the principles we hold at our core: partnership, presence, and the power of continuity.



**Julia:**

## A history written on her own terms

### Enabling and home support

In 2019 a woman who had undergone a leg amputation some years earlier got in touch with Age UK Exeter. Their name and enabling service had been mentioned by a friend, and she thought this might be a service that could support her to carry out a project she had long had in mind. It was not simply mobility that she sought, but meaning. Through one-to-one support from our **Enabling and Home Support Service**, she began working closely with Andrew, a home support worker. Their relationship, she reflects, was built on flexibility, attentiveness, and shared curiosity. He helped with home visits, joined her in heritage centre visits, and supported the research she'd long dreamt of realising.

**"It gave me the chance to achieve something I never thought I could. It removed the sense that things were too difficult to even try."**

She instigated the Devon in the 1920s project, a collaboration of historians researching what life was like in Devon 100 years ago. This led on to her organising a programme of events to share the research with the public, the Festival of Devon in the 1920s. Her work has now received national recognition: in 2025 she was presented with the British Association for Local History's Outstanding Individual Contribution award and has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

**"The Enabling Service is all about fulfilling and enriching life. Now I wake up in the morning feeling positive, ready to continue the work I started and have already come so far in."**

Reflecting on one memory, she smiled: **"getting out of the city and discovering historical sites across Devon."** These were not just outings, they were acts of reconnections.

She said she'd love others to know **"they can be enabled in such a positive way and have such a fulfilling later life."** Her perspective reminds us that our services are not simply supports offered to those in need, but platforms of collaboration, creativity, and shared growth.





**Ann:**

## Finding belonging through care

### Volunteering in daycare

**"I retired after I lost my husband, I felt empty. I had no purpose in my life and nothing to get up for in the morning."**

Ann didn't come to Age UK Exeter as a client. She came with a quiet offering: a few hours of her time. What began as a half-day of volunteering soon became three full days a week in our Day Care setting. Her role is steady, relational, deeply human.

**"Coming in the morning, settling in, offering drinks, setting the table, serving lunch, clearing afterwards... maybe socialising, joining music activities, sitting with the clients and talking with them."**

Ann spent over 40 years working in care. Volunteering didn't teach her something entirely new. It taught her to see differently.

**"I learned more about what carers are facing. Especially those living with someone with dementia. When you work as a carer you do your job, and then you go back home, and your time is your own. It's different for someone living with someone with dementia, it's a full-time job, really, with no respite."**

She also found something she hadn't expected; something it turns out she needs:

**"I got a huge benefit. It gave me as much as I gave to them. Now, I have reason to wake up and organise my day. Now I know I can deal with loss. I found a purpose. And you need a purpose to continue. Volunteering gives me that."**

For Ann, care is not a service, it is a way of belonging.

**Karen:**

## Two decades of care and adaptation

### Enabling & marketing

In 2004, Karen saw a small postcard in a window. It advertised a role in our Sitting and Escort service. What began as **"something new to try"** became a lifelong commitment.

Over twenty years, Karen's role evolved, from coordinating visits, to leading the Enabling and Home Support team, to shaping the charity's broader vision. Through every shift, one thing remained unchanged:

**"The clients will always be the priority for me."**

She speaks of variety, challenge, and pride.

**"I love my job, I seriously love my job, even though it can be quite demanding."**

For Karen, quality is not just a standard, it's a shared practice.



# Everyday acts



## Glimpses of change



## Chris: Information and advice

Chris was our Information and Advice Manager for nearly four years and was extremely dedicated to the role, single-handedly restarting and managing the service for Age UK Exeter after the pandemic.

In the past year from June 2024 to June 2025, he saw 580 clients, resulting in 2283 contacts. 338 of these clients were accessing the services of the charity for the first time. In a 6-month period, he secured £361,342 in benefit entitlements.

His highlights were seeing benefits success, such as positive attendance allowance and pension credit claims. He also helped a lot of clients with digital inclusion and explained every step that he took to enable them for the future. He also took time to explain to people their eligibilities, empowering them to live well in later life. He commented that, **“helping people apply for a blue disability badge can seem like a small thing, but it is life changing for people.”**

Chris often saw older people with high levels of anxiety. Mobility issues, disability, mental health issues, bereavement, difficulties with the digital age, fear of scams and/or changes in living arrangements were often reasons why people were making contact with the service.

He also enjoyed the charities partnership with the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society in the last year, mainly supporting clients with form filling in preparation for their personal independence payment (PIP) claims.

Chris commented, **“You’re dealing with real people in this role, not everyone’s the same. The nature of the role is face to face and confidential. It can be very difficult, but it is so rewarding when you help people.”**

A client recently wrote, **“Thank you so much for all your help. You made me feel at ease with the whole process. It means so much to me to have the blue badge. Life will be so much easier. Thank you for such a wonderful service.”**





# Age UK Exeter community **voices**

In this section, we step aside. These are not stories told about people. These are voices, as they are, as they came, speaking to what matters.

## **No analysis. No framing. Just voices.**



## On belonging

**“Age UK Exeter is a very friendly place to make friends and feel safe.”**

Qualitative Impact Comments -  
March 2024

**“You’ve made me very welcome, and I am glad of socialising with new people.”**

Chair Based Exercise Group -  
March 2024



**“Made a huge difference to me and my other half - coping with declining Alzheimer’s in myself.”**

**So good to be with others in the same boat and now feeling so well supported and cared for. Made a lovely new bunch of friends and a new way of life!”**

Information and Advice, Carers Support,  
Budding Friends, Daycare, Handyperson  
Client - April 2024.

## On daily life and dignity

**“My cleaner is my lifeline, not only for cleaning, but someone to talk to.”**

Enabling and Home Support Client -  
March 2024

**“Having home help leaves me with the energy to take part in activities away from the home.”**

Enabling and Home Support Client -  
March 2024

**“It’s reassuring to know Age UK Exeter are at the end of the phone and will help if they can.”**

Enabling and Home Support Client -  
March 2024





## On loneliness and connection

**“Age UK Exeter has helped my mental health. I don’t like staying in on my own too much.”**

Chair Based Exercise Group - March 2024

**“I have had a volunteer visitor come to encourage me out for a walk for over a year and we get on really well. She is reliable and it’s very comforting knowing she will always come when she says or phone if she can’t.”**

Volunteer Visiting Client – March 2024

## On small things that matter

**“I enjoy the fish and chips and the chat.”**

Lunch Club - March 2024

**“Meeting different people and enjoying the exercise group.”**

Chair Based Exercise Group - March 2024

**“There is always a friendly ear when further aid is requested.”**

Qualitative Impact Comments - April 2024

**“Knowing that help is available.”**

Enabling and Home Support Client - March 2024

**“Providing a service to enable contact with others and wellbeing.”**

Qualitative Impact Comments - March 2024

**“Had a very good experience in all areas. Felt very included and supported by everyone.”**

Enabling and Home Support Client - April 2024

This is not a summary. It’s a chorus. These voices, grateful, hesitant, practical, emotional, are not statistics. They are the heartbeat of what we do. We listened.



# Challenges & reflections

## Holding complexity: Listening to the tensions in our work

Working alongside older people today means sitting with complexity. While much of this report celebrates what is possible - stories of agency, relationships, and quiet transformation - there is also a need to acknowledge the obstacles. Not to dramatise them, but to understand them. From the structural to the emotional, these reflections help us stay accountable, human, and honest.



# 1. Digital exclusion: A growing divide

Digitalisation continues to reshape everyday life, but not always in ways that include everyone. In our 2024 satisfaction and wellbeing survey, 26% of respondents identified digitalisation as one of their main challenges, ranking it just below health and above loneliness. This reflects a broader concern echoed by our CEO, **“From registering for events to booking train tickets, so many everyday tasks are increasingly digital, yet many older adults are being left behind in this shift. It is not just about access, but about dignity and inclusion.”**

Ava, our new Volunteer Officer, reinforced this point in her early reflections, **“People face real issues with digitalisation. It’s a barrier.”**

At the Over 50s Forum, members voiced similar frustrations, including being redirected to international call centres and the closure of accessible local services.

# 2. Caregivers under pressure

While we celebrate the commitment of unpaid carers and family members, their strain is real. As our CEO noted, **“They need space to breathe.”** Yet, the support available does not always meet the need. We have extended our work in mapping services for people living with dementia and hope to continue to understand carers needs and provide creative services to support them better.

Behind every statistic, there’s an emotional weight that is hard to measure. Our staff teams have witnessed the silent pressures facing family members as they try to navigate decisions about long-term care, isolation, and shifting relationships. From these quieter notes, we are reminded that supporting older people means supporting the informal networks that hold their lives together.





### 3. Volunteering and emotional bonds

Volunteering remains a cornerstone of our work, but it too holds challenge. Ava flagged limitations in outreach and promotion, noting that “we need more impactful promotion.”

As Ann noted above, volunteering can bring so much to both volunteer and client and at Age UK Exeter our volunteers contribute so much to our work that it would be very difficult to put the difference they make into words.

### 4. Sustaining impact with finite resources

Like most charities, we face rising demands with finite resources. It is widely acknowledged that we have an ageing population and the Age UK State of Health and Care of Older People in England 2024 report stated that the social care system is under significant pressure.

We continue to try and support this need, working with partners, being innovative, looking at diverse funding streams and continuing to offer services that are person-centred and focus on quality and care.

### 5. Disappearing local spaces

Finally, there's the erosion of community infrastructure. Forum members shared frustration over the closure of local services and provisions, spaces that were vital not just for service, but for dignity and belonging. Transport, healthcare, leisure facilities, accessibility are all topics discussed often in our forum setting.

This shows the interconnectedness of issues that affect our older people's daily lives and the importance of us continuing to listen to our communities' needs and aspirations and at times to advocate for them.



# Where we go from here





As we look ahead, our path is shaped not only by strategy, but by the everyday wisdom of those we work alongside, older people, carers, volunteers, and staff. Their voices, needs, and hopes guide us forward.

In the coming year, Age UK Exeter will continue to ground its work in the realities of ageing in our city, expanding daily care and dementia support, increasing volunteer engagement, strengthening digital access, and securing the financial resilience needed to keep going.

These aren't abstract ambitions. They are reflections of real lives and real conversations, from those seeking human connection after loss, to those navigating systems that too often exclude them. From our Over 50's Forum to carer feedback and client comments, the message is clear: involvement matters. People want to be seen, heard, and part of something that works.

This report does not mark an end point. It will be part of how we shape, evaluate, and refine what we do. It is a reflection of mutual impact, and a reminder that we are not alone in this work.

We will continue to view age positively and we will continue to empower the over 50's in our community to live life to the full.

## References

[Census Data, 2021. Devon County Council, Facts and Figures Census 2021 - Facts and Figures](#)

[Age UK, State of Health and Care of Older People in England Report, 2024, State of Health and Care of Older People in England 2024](#)



# Thank you to all who contributed!

This Age UK Exeter Impact Report would not be possible without the support and input from our volunteers, staff, supporters, members and trustees for which we are always grateful.

With special thanks to all the Age UK Exeter service users and participants who took time to share their stories and insights within the report. To our University of Exeter Intern Ali Abd Allatef for writing the report. To JLL for designing and creating the report.

**Thank you for all  
making a difference!**

**You've changed lives  
for the 50+ community  
in Exeter.**

To note the photographs within the report are not true representatives of the people who shared their stories, they are in place to keep the anonymity of the individuals.

