



**Annual Report
2018/19**

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Chief Executive of
Age UK Gloucestershire

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Rob Fountain,
Chief Executive,
Age UK Gloucestershire

About Age UK Gloucestershire

Age UK Gloucestershire is an independent local charity. Our ambition is to make Gloucestershire the best county in which to grow older. We want this to be the case for all older people, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Welcome

We are delighted to be able to share with you some of our achievements for 2018/19 in this bite-sized report. This document highlights some of the ways we've been having a positive impact on the lives of older people in Gloucestershire.

Our ambition is to make Gloucestershire the best county in which to grow older and over the past 12 months we have been working tirelessly to make this a reality.

Thanks to a generous donation in the will of a local man, we have been able to invest in our Navigate: Information & Advice service. Our staff now have more time to listen to enquiries and work with people to identify solutions to the challenges they face. This means we can help more people at first contact, and in a more in-depth way. You will find some examples of how we are doing this within this report.

We have also secured funding for some other key projects. For example,

funding from local statutory health and social care authorities has enabled us to extend our Out of Hospital service to community hospitals. Elsewhere, a grant as part of the Armed Forces Covenant is helping us to support older veterans across the county. Again, more information about the impact of these and other projects is included in this report.

Much of our work is only possible because of the generosity of our supporters and the donations of time and money they make. Throughout this document you will find evidence of how we are turning these donations into activity that is having positive impact on the lives of older people in Gloucestershire.

When asked how they felt after receiving our support:

- **94%** of older people said they felt better able to resolve issues
- **83%** of older people said they felt better able to remain independent at home; and
- **83%** of older people said they felt happier than they were before.

Taken for our 2018 / 19 performance review

If you have any thoughts or ideas about what else we could do to improve things for older people in Gloucestershire – or if you want to know more about the work we do – please get in touch.

Rob Fountain, Chief Executive,
Age UK Gloucestershire



In 2018/19
there were 1013
referrals to our Out of
Hospital service – a
19% increase on
the previous
year.

“
Christine
was so helpful
and found so many
things that go on in my area,
a great number of which I
knew nothing about at all.

”
Joyce, 78

Out of Hospital Service

Last year our Out of Hospital service helped more than 1000 people to regain their independence after a stay in hospital. 93% of those we worked with rated this service as excellent or good*.

Our records show that in 2018/2019, referrals to our Out of Hospital service increased by 19% compared with the previous year. This service is funded by the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG), so there is no charge to the person or their family.

Our Out of Hospital service is available for people age 65 or over, who have been admitted to hospital and are registered with a Gloucestershire GP. Our countywide team of paid staff and trained volunteers work with people for up to 4 weeks after leaving hospital, reassuring them and helping them to identify what they need to rebuild their confidence living at home.

Our support can include:

- Help with practical tasks to support clients to settle back at home, such as a one-off essential food shops, and collecting prescriptions
- Information, advice and sign-posting to other relevant services
- A 'Safe and Well' Home Safety Check
- Support to access benefits advice and guidance, such as how they can claim Attendance Allowance
- A volunteer visitor for up to four weeks, who can provide company at home and can support clients to rebuild their confidence

Referrals to the service do not only come from health or social care

professionals, we accept referrals from friends and relatives, and self-referrals.

In January 2019, we launched a pilot project to extend our Out of Hospital service to include community hospitals. Between January and March we received 38 referrals as a result of this, showing that, even in its infancy, this extension to our service is making a huge difference to older people in our communities.

“Age UK Gloucestershire is recognised as a valuable partner in the county’s health and social care system and is committed to working collaboratively for the benefit of our older people and their communities. Through the success of the service in the acute hospitals, the CCG were happy to be able to support the year-long pilot in the county’s community hospitals and we are looking forward to seeing the results and working with Age UK Gloucestershire in the future”

Sally Jones, Health & Social Care Commissioning Manager, NHS Gloucestershire CCG.

*Taken from feedback forms completed by our clients when our work with them comes to an end.

Supporting Benefit Claims

Every year, up to £3.5 billion of state benefits go unclaimed by older people in the UK. Some are put off by the claims process, others simply don't know that they qualify for extra support.

In 2018/19, we helped older people in Gloucestershire claim more than £1.4m in benefits – a significant increase compared to the year before, when we helped people claim £1.3m in benefits.

We also carried out 628 appointments in people's own homes or at our office, supporting individuals with information, reviewing their financial situation and addressing significant welfare concerns.

Over the past year we've been informing people about the benefits they can claim, as well as busting benefits myths. For example, many people do not realise that they are entitled to claim some benefits even if they own their own home or have savings – we've been correcting this misunderstanding.

We have been providing this support via our Navigate: Information & Advice service. Our advisors work with people in person and over the phone, to help them work out what they are entitled to.

This service is invaluable for many people – particularly those with more complex benefit claims (for example, many people are entitled to claim more than one benefit).

We've also been helping people via Age UK's online benefits calculator. This is a free and confidential online service, which helps people work out what they can claim. It takes just 10 minutes to complete and for many people this provides them with all the help and information they need.

You can access the calculator at: benefitscheck.ageuk.org.uk/home/start

The benefits we have been helping people to claim include:

- State pensions
- Pensions credits (guaranteed credit and savings credit)
- Council tax support
- Housing benefit
- Winter fuel payments
- Cold weather payments
- Warm home discounts
- Attendance allowance
- Financial help with health costs
- Financial help for one-off urgent expenses

An elderly man with white hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, is seated at a table. He is looking down at a small, white, rectangular object held in his hands. A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a pink top, is leaning over him from the right, looking at the object with interest. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a dining area with wooden chairs.

“

I am 93 years old and disabled, so greatly appreciate what I am about to receive. It will go towards the extra costs incurred due to my disabilities

”

Norman, 93

In 2018/19, we helped older people in Gloucestershire claim more than £1.4m in benefits.

Navigate: Information & Advice

Our Navigate: Information & Advice service is helping people remain safe and independent at home, for as long as they want to. Feedback forms completed by those using the service indicate that 95% of people rated their experience as excellent or good.

In 2018/19, we responded to more than 1200 contacts a month. The majority of people are supported over the phone, with others emailing or visiting us at our office in Gloucester.

In 42 cases we provided immediate support to people who needed urgent access to food/or fuel.

Our experienced advisors and volunteers provided information about our own projects and services, and also directed people to support available from other organisations if they were better placed to help.

Through this service we are helping people make informed choices about all aspects of later life by:

- Signposting to local organisations who offer social activities, services, or who can help with queries
- Helping people navigate the social care system
- Ensuring people have enough money by offering free benefits checks and helping with benefit claims
- Providing advice on staying warm at home, home adaptations and how to prevent falls.

Our free Guide to Later Life in Gloucestershire has been distributed to people across the county and contains lots of useful information.

On average, in 2018/19, we supported more than 1200 people each month.

It is also available online at: ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire/our-services/our-guide-to-later-life/

Better Later Lives

In addition, we supported almost 100 people with more in-depth support through our 'Better Later Lives' casework project. This service works on an individual basis with older people, especially those experiencing loneliness. By using guided conversations, our team explore issues and identify solutions. Casework takes place both at our Gloucester office and in the homes of older people throughout Gloucestershire.



“

Your service
is wonderful.
You helped me claim
Attendance Allowance
and it was all done with
dignity and kindness

”

Laura, 68

Engagement

We've been speaking to people throughout the county about a range of important issues.

Through our 'Everyone's Ageing – Let's Do It Better' engagement project, we gained feedback from more than 300 people about what's good about life in Gloucestershire and what needs to improve.

Through focus groups and questionnaires completed across the county, it became overwhelmingly clear that public transport was considered to be the most important area to target for improvement. In particular, improving buses was seen as key to ensuring people can continue to access important services and activities as they grow older.

Having access to information, feeling part of a community and feeling safe after dark were also identified as areas where Gloucestershire needs to improve. The findings of this research

are already shaping our priorities for the next 12 months.

Our 'Knead to Know' project is run in conjunction with another local charity, The Wiggly Worm. Through this programme we aim to get the public thinking about – (and planning for) the later stages of their life.

The project has already resulted in more than 360 people talking about their later life plans and preferences, while completing a fun baking activity – this helps to make the conversations easier. Conversations to date have covered some highly sensitive issues including wills, funeral plans and end of life care. Through these sessions we have gained valuable insights into attitudes and preferences that will enable us to provide better support and advice in the future.

We also gave 50 older people the opportunity to contribute to a Bank of England consultation on financial issues conducted as part of their outreach programme.

Led by Andy Haldane, the Bank of England's Chief Economist, these discussions were specifically for people over 50, so their views could ultimately shape future Bank policy. Topics discussed included the rise of online banking and resulting branch closures, as well as online security.

"I would like to thank the team at Age UK Gloucestershire for expertly organising what was a really terrific event; the participants at the event, who we worked hard for 3 hours on a hot day, were brim-full of candid views, ideas and good humour"
Andy Haldane, Bank of England.



Our 'Knead to Know' project has resulted in more than 360 people talking about their later life plans and preferences.

Keeping Active and Socially Connected

Over the past 12 months, we have played a key part in keeping thousands of older people in Gloucestershire physically active and/or socially connected. A recent survey we carried out found that 100% of the community activators* we work with would recommend AUKG to others looking to create opportunities for older people.

In the UK as a whole, half of people aged over 75 live alone and two fifths of older people say that television is their main form of company. We've been working with communities across the county to help them develop activities that are more inclusive of older people.

We have:

- Facilitated over 120 choir sessions, averaging around 35 participants at each session. In December 2018, these choirs performed at our Christmas Carol Concert at Gloucester Cathedral, which was attended by more than 500 people.

- Supported the set up of two new intergenerational groups, including one which we supported from the initial idea through to it becoming a sustainable activity. This was our first community activator project.
- Provided advice and guidance to a range of local groups to help them increase opportunities for older people. For example, we worked with Coleway and District on a project to regenerate a community centre in Coleford, and with the Falcon Bowles Club in Painswick to help them recruit new memberships and widen community interest. We're continuing to work with the Deer Park Archers to set up a men's shed in Leckhampton.

Research clearly shows that remaining physically active as we age is a key part of staying fit and well. To help with this we have been working with a number of organisations and individuals, to support them in delivering activities.

We have:

- Worked with the Gloucestershire Football Association, England Netball, Gloucester Rugby and local communities, to help establish three new walking sports groups. These are attended by an average of 60 older people each week
- Helped volunteers to gain coaching qualifications through the Gloucestershire Football Association
- Helped people to gain activity delivery certificates through Age UK's 'Get Active, Feel Great' programme
- We've promoted sessions and tournaments on behalf of grassroots organisations, which are providing activities for more than 1000 participants.

*Community activators are local citizens who take action to reach out to older people in their neighbourhood.



“

Walking rugby has helped my fitness hugely. I'm so grateful for the football providing an activity post retirement.

”

Rod, 68

We've promoted sessions and tournaments on behalf of grassroots organisations, which are providing activities for more **than 1000 participants.**

Other Key Projects

In 2018/19, we also delivered a number of other important projects. Some of these are designed to support particular groups of older people within the community, while others are looking to tackle a specific issue.

Homeshare scheme

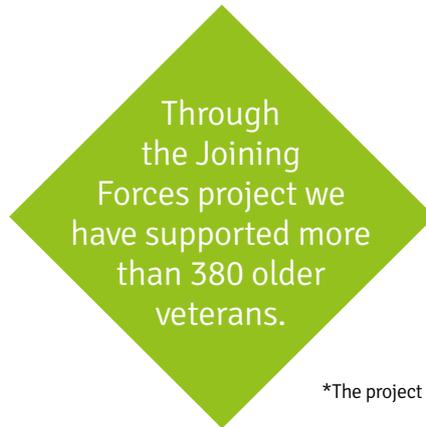
In February 2019, we launched Homeshare Gloucestershire. The scheme brings together older people who have a spare room with people who need affordable accommodation and are happy to chat and lend a hand. It is a great option for someone who misses having other people in their home and would welcome some low-level practical support around the house. It also enables the older person to make a positive contribution to the life of someone else.

Our role is to match people, carefully oversee all the arrangements and provide professional on-going support.

While it is still in its early days, we have already received significant interest from both householders and potential sharers.

Joining Forces

This project is a partnership with SSAFA Gloucestershire, to improve the lives of older veterans. Since the project launched in 2017, we have supported more than 380 local older veterans. In addition, 180 family members of older veterans have accessed support from AUKG and SSAFA Gloucestershire.



The Joining Forces Project supports anyone born before 1950 who has served in the Forces, including National Service. It aims to ensure those who served have the essentials for a safe and comfortable later life.

Our support can include:

- One-to-one specific support to help with planning later life
- Social activities across the county, such as Veterans' Get Togethers and special veterans' events
- Help applying for financial benefits
- Financial assistance to purchase equipment and home adaptations to support continued independence
- Help with obtaining Veterans' Badges and service medals

*The project is funded via the Armed Forces Covenant, using Libor funds.

Gloucester Life Changes

This project is for people approaching 60 or older, who are facing a difficult change in circumstances – for example, the loss of a partner or being diagnosed with an illness.

Working in partnership with The British Red Cross and Cruse Bereavement Care, we provide coordinated support that helps people to move forward feeling stronger and more confident.

In 2018/19, we provided one-to-one support to more than 100 individuals through our Gloucester Life Changes project.

Our input to the programme supports people to:

- Join in with social activities
- Meet with others in similar situations and offer peer support
- Find out more about services to help them stay safe, comfortable and independent
- Apply for financial benefits they may be entitled to.

As part of the programme we have set up 11 weekly ‘Springboard Groups’ across the city and there are more in the pipeline. These provide a welcoming environment for people to socialise and try new things, such as learning the ukulele, creative arts and exploring the local area.

A performance evaluation we carried out found that 100% of the people we worked with on this project felt that they had achieved their goals.

Supporting those with Dementia

In January 2018, we launched a pilot project to support people with dementia and their carers living in the community. The purpose of the project is to enable people and their families to move forward independently, with confidence and resilience, following a diagnosis of dementia.

The project provides support to people aged 65 and over who live in and around Cheltenham and Gloucester. It is for people who have been recently diagnosed with dementia, or who are

living with mild to moderate dementia. It also provides support to their family carers.

Our trained project team work with people for around a month to help them remain as independent as possible in their own home by:

- Establishing what support is needed
- Exploring the client’s personal strengths and guiding them on how they can maximise these to live well
- Connecting clients with social activities and services within the local community
- Providing support with applications for financial benefits
- Signposting clients and their families to other services that can provide support.

“
This is my
happy time

”
Springboard ukulele
group member



To find out more about Age UK Gloucestershire
or to make a donation contact:

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