

Autumn 2020



Between March and June 2020 Age UK Isle of Wight supported 4,100 people. This was in a variety of ways from collecting shopping or prescriptions, to telephone wellbeing calls.

Since then we have received feedback from some of the people that we have helped:

My worry was how to get shopping but over the past eight weeks the problem has now been solved with the help of Age UK. Thank you

The first few weeks of shielding were quite scary with supermarket delivery slots unavailable and medication needed. Everyone I spoke to at Age UK was supportive and took the time to chat. A lifeline in such difficult times. Thank you so much.

It was nice to have people each week to talk to on the phone, as we have no family on the Island, so made lockdown less lonely. Also the weekly food boxes were useful, to avoid going into shops as much as possible.

Although my mother lives with my husband and I, the weekly telephone call has been so welcomed, it really helped us to boost my mother's morale. The lady who rings sounds lovely and really takes an interest in what she has to say. It's nice to know we haven't been forgotten.

Nothing was ever too much trouble and I will be forever grateful. Thank you Age UK IW

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WINTER SUPPORT HUB

“Winter Support Hub? But it’s only Autumn!” I’m sure you’re thinking. It’s getting cooler but your hat and gloves might still be neatly tucked away in the wardrobe for now, whilst sunglasses and a light jacket are still in use. Icy temperatures (and pavements!) might seem too far away to worry about, but it’s never too early to start preparing for the Winter months. To help, Age UK Isle of Wight have created a hub of information to help you plan for the colder, darker days.



Keeping your body warm

Our bodies react to cold by directing our blood supply to our vital organs and away from our extremities. To keep our hands and feet warm it is important to keep our whole body warm. Some top tips to do this are:

Wearing layers- several thin layers of clothing will keep you warmer than one thick layer

Wearing a hat- most heat is lost through your head

Keep active- moving helps generate heat to keep your body warm and stimulates blood flow

Put your feet up- Hot air rises so keep your feet on a stool, above floor level when sitting down

Wear waterproof shoes- to keep your socks and feet dry



Keeping your spirits up

It’s not unusual to feel a bit blue in the winter months. When the weather is miserable and the evenings are darker it can be harder to get out and do the things that you enjoy. We asked people from ages 65 to 95 what helps them beat the winter blues, why not give them a go?

Keep moving- “I love to dance, sometimes just to the music on TV even if it’s just leg tapping, it helps me to stay positive” Being active, even just a little bit, is proven to help give you a boost.

Keep busy- “When I’m feeling depressed I say ‘right, what am I going to do?’ I get a good book or see a friend” Do a puzzle, try writing, take up a hobby.

Don’t ignore your feelings- If you’ve been feeling down for a while and it’s stopping you from doing the things that matter, you don’t have to suffer in silence. Share how you are feeling with a friend, family or your doctor.



Protecting yourself against the flu

As we age our immune system becomes weaker and less able to fight off viruses. Therefore, if you are 65 and over it is vital that you have your seasonal flu vaccination. Flu is not simply a bad cold and it can increase your risk of more serious illnesses.

The NHS provides a free flu jab if you are over 65, have certain health conditions, have had a stroke, have a weakened immune system, you care for an older person who may be at risk if you fall ill.

Most places start to offer the flu jab by early October, as it takes 14 days to take effect it is best to have it as early as possible. You can have it at your GP surgery or a local pharmacy offering the service.

Call: 525282 | Email: info@ageukiw

Tips to prepare for the Winter months



Planning for bad weather

Fortunately particularly bad weather doesn't come around too often in the UK but it's worth making sure you are prepared. Beat the bad weather with these simple steps:

Keep an eye on the forecast- it's good to know what to expect

If bad weather is forecast make sure you have everything you need- check you have enough medication, stock up on some food to keep in the cupboards or the freezer in case it is harder to leave the house

Take extra care on slippery ground- wear shoes with good grip and consider keeping salt and/or a mixture handy to grit paths

Have a torch at home- in case of any power cuts, and check the batteries

Keep emergency numbers nearby- having the number of your energy supplier can be really handy if there is a power cut



Eating Well

It is important to keep well nourished. Losing weight is not an inevitable part of ageing and unintentional weight loss in later life is a serious issue.

Over 1 in 10 people aged 65+ are at risk of malnutrition. If you find that you are losing weight unintentionally, feeling more tired, have a smaller appetite, difficulty chewing or swallowing, find planning and cooking meals becoming more effort or have mouth/dental problems you may be malnourished.

Malnourishment can weaken our muscles and increase the risk of falls. Lack of nourishment can also decrease our white blood cells and make it harder for our bodies to fight illnesses so it is important to make sure we are eating well.

Eating well means you're more likely to feel healthier, stay active for longer and protect yourself against illness. During winter aim for at least one hot meal every day, as well as hot drinks throughout.

If you have a small appetite, try eating small meals and snacks six times a day rather than three large meals a day. Many supermarkets offer home delivery which may make shopping easier for you.

It is always a good idea to keep a record of your weight and regularly check it. If you are concerned, speak to a health professional.

Read on to find out how else Age UK Isle of Wight could help you prepare for Winter.

Remember, if you would like any further information or support don't hesitate to contact us using the details below.

HOW WE CAN HELP

We've given you some tips on how to look after yourself this Winter, but there are a few ways that Age UK Isle of Wight might be able to help you too!

Welfare Benefits

Each year up to £3.5bn of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit goes unclaimed by older people. Age UK Isle of Wight can help make it easier and can advise you about benefits that you may be entitled to, including: Blue Badge eligibility, Winter Fuel Payments, Carers Allowance and more.

We can support you to fill in the correct forms and throughout the claims process. Virtual assessments are also available. This service is provided free of charge.

Since the service began in April 2005, we have helped older people on the Isle of Wight to claim over £6million in extra benefits.



Keeping Independent

As the dark evenings and less pleasant weather comes into force, running some of our day to day errands can seem like harder work. Trips to the supermarket in wind and rain don't seem all that appealing, walking your dog is not as pleasant as it is on a summer afternoon and we lose the motivation to keep on top of the housework. Age UK Isle of Wight's Just About You service can help with chores like these and help mean you have one less thing to worry about.

Or perhaps the winter is a time where you feel especially lonely. Grandchildren are back to school and family from the mainland might be less inclined to take a trip to the Isle of Wight now that summer is over. If this is the case, Age UK Isle of Wights Good Neighbour Scheme offer a befriending service that could be just what you need to keep your spirits up.

Preparing your home for Winter

During the colder months you'll spend more time at home than normal. It's therefore important to ensure your home is prepared to keep you warm.

Keep draughts at bay- adding a brush to your letterbox will instantly help to reduce heat loss as the air has much less space to pass through. Draught excludes are another inexpensive way to reduce draughts, a long thin cushion placed at the foot of a door.

Get rid of gutter clutter- Wet leaves, mud and moss can be a disaster for your building if you allow it to build up in gutters and drains, leading to water leaking into the roof and walls.

Check outdoor lights are clean and in working order- check that any solar lights are not covered with debris to allow them to work properly.

If you should need support with carrying out any of the above, Age UK Isle of Wight's Home Safe team could help you out. You could even be eligible for a free assessment and provisions to help keep your home warm this winter.

Can You Help?

Could you provide befriending support, collect client shopping or prescriptions, support fundraising events or help complete benefit applications?

If you would like to volunteer for Age UK Isle of Wight visit bit.ly/35yGaFv