**Background Information**

**Age UK Leeds**

Age UK Leeds is a local charity, set up in 1975, whose aim to help older people improve later life. Based in the newly refurbished Bradbury Building in the centre of Leeds, we work across the district providing a range of services for older people:

* Social Care: this includes support for older people with a long term condition to live independently, a support service for men with a diagnosis of prostate cancer, and a mental health hospital aftercare service
* Hospital to Home based at St James Hospital
* Digital inclusion: this includes providing low cost IT training for older people in our IT suite and also in community centres across Leeds, as well as low cost home IT support
* Health and wellbeing: this includes exercise and hobby classes.
* Advocacy, Information and Advice: this includes advice on benefits and pension credit, housing and social care as well as form filling and an advocacy service for older people facing ‘Safeguarding’ and elder abuse issues,

Many of our services are supported by volunteers e.g. walk leaders, befrienders/buddies fundraisers, advice workers.

Age UK Leeds also has two trading companies: one selling insurance and other products, and the other is the Arch Café.

Age UK Leeds also takes part in local and national campaigning on issues that affect older people.

Age UK Leeds has over 30 staff, full and part time and is supported by over 30 volunteers. It is managed by a Board of Trustees.

We are funded from a variety of sources including the local authority and trusts. However, like many charities, we are always struggling for more resources and also rely on donations and other community fundraising. For more information about Age UK Leeds, take a look at our website: [www.ageukleeds.org.uk](http://www.ageukleeds.org.uk)

**History of Age UK**

**The Second World War** brought hardship to everyone in Britain and older people were especially vulnerable. Many families became separated or lost their main breadwinner. There was no welfare state and the ‘poor law’ provision of the time was woefully inadequate.

In **1940** a group of individuals as well as governmental and voluntary organisations came together to discuss how this situation could be improved. As a result, the Old People’s Welfare Committee, chaired by Eleanor Rathbone, was born.

This committed soon gained national recognition and in **1944** it became known as the National Old People’s Welfare Committee (NOPWC), taking under its umbrella many local organisations working to improve older people’s welfare. The NOPWC now began to co-ordinate and facilitate the work of these local committees.

**1950 – 1960**

With the introduction of the welfare state in the 1950s, money became available from local and national government to fund local work with older people, therefore, the number of local OPWC’s more than doubled and continued to grow throughout the 1960’s.

**1960 - 1970**

Help the Aged was formed in 1961 to raise money in response to the needs of older refugees flowing natural disasters and conflict in the former Yugoslavia, former East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Rwanda.

Help the Aged continued to raise money for emergency aid overseas and also became involved with projects for older people in Britain. They established day centres and began pioneering the building of better housing for older people.

**1970 - 1980**

It was not until 1971 that the NOPWC became independent of government and was re-named Age Concern, with many of the local groups also adopting the new name. Together they benefited from a unified image and name reflecting the fact that they were not just committees but active providers of direct services. The new name showed local groups provided essential services to older people and actually got things done for them.

**1980 - 1990**

In a period of high unemployment, Age Concern became a national agent for job creation and training schemes run by local groups and drew attention to the plight of older workers suffering from long-term unemployment or redundancy.

**1990 – 2000**

During this decade of social, political and financial change, Age Concern and Help the Aged continued to provide essential services to older people and to prepare for the challenges of the new century.

**2000 – Present**

In **July 2000**, organisations sharing the name Age Concern came together to work in a federation; a structure which reflected their independence and autonomy but also their interdependence. Age Concern England, as the national federation member, worked alongside local Age Concerns and provided support and leadership in areas like campaigning and policy.

In **2001** Help the Aged merged with Research into Ageing. The charity continued to build on its research and policy work, and in 2005 it took a new strategic direction, shifting its focus to disadvantaged older people.

On **1st April 2009** Age Concern England and Help the Aged joined together to create a new charity dedicated to improving later life for everyone.

In **2010** the new charity adopted the name Age UK. Today Age UK is a national network of over 1000 independent groups established by local people whose common aim is “help more people love later life”.

Age UK England, the national organisation, gives advice and support, but every local Age UK is independent and run by local people, raising their own funds to provide the services required within their own area.

More information can be found at [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)