

Making Norfolk a great place to grow older



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

# Introduction from CEO and Chair of Age UK Norfolk

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Ann Donkin,  
CEO



Stephen Drake,  
Chair

**In 2024–25, Age UK Norfolk continued to provide vital services for older people across the county, including Information & Advice, Welfare Benefits support, Advocacy, Money Matters, Befriending, Digital Inclusion, and Travel Companionship. These services complement statutory provision and aim to achieve lasting improvements in people’s economic, social, emotional, and health outcomes.**

At the heart of our approach is a person-centred philosophy — every contact counts. We ensure older people can access information and support to make informed decisions, understand and manage finances, claim their entitlements, and maintain a voice in matters affecting their lives. Our Befriending and Travel Companionship services, including the Gift of Friendship programme, help reduce loneliness and build confidence, keeping people connected with family, friends, and their wider communities.

These achievements would not be possible without the dedication of our 37 staff and over 180 volunteers, who contribute across all areas of our work. Volunteers bring their skills, experience, and time to support service users while developing personal skills and social connections themselves.

Demand for our services remains high, reflecting the ongoing financial pressures on the statutory sector and increasing complexity of need, as many older people face multiple challenges in the current economic context.

As we reflect on the year, we are proud of the impact our services have had and remain committed to supporting older people to live well, stay connected, and enjoy independence throughout later life.

# Mission, Priorities & Strategic Context

Age UK Norfolk's mission is to help older people live well, stay informed, and remain independent. Our 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, launched in June 2024, was shaped by over 100 older people, staff, and volunteers.

Key concerns identified were staying healthy, loneliness, and loss of independence, alongside cost of living pressures and reduced community connection. There was strong support for continuing services for people aged 50+, their families, and carers, with a focus on our core strengths: Welfare Benefits, Money Matters, Information & Advice, Befriending, Digital Inclusion, and Advocacy.

The consultation also highlighted gaps, particularly the need for more community-based and face-to-face support. In response, we have expanded group activities and introduced programmes like Gift of Friendship to reduce isolation and strengthen social connections.

From these findings, the Charity developed five strategic goals:

1. **Connect** people to the information and advice they need to manage resources and daily life.
2. **Enable** access to communities and services to support mental and physical wellbeing.
3. **Build partnerships** to drive an age-friendly and inclusive Norfolk.
4. **Campaign** against ageism and support people to live well as they age.
5. **Achieve more for people in later life by being a sustainable**, innovative organisation and great place to work.



# Information & Advice

**Access to timely, reliable information and advice is essential for older people to make informed decisions, manage finances, and access the support they are entitled to.**

Our accreditation under the Quality of Advice Standard (QAS) and Advice Quality Standard (AQS) demonstrates high-quality delivery and in 2024–25, Age UK Norfolk provided practical, person-centred support through multiple channels, helping older people navigate the Welfare Benefits system, community care, and legal concerns.

Through these services, Age UK Norfolk ensures older people are supported, empowered, and better able to manage their lives and wellbeing.

## In 2024-2025 we:

- Handled 12,408 Advice Line calls
- Dealt with 429 referrals from The Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN)
- Processed 249 referrals for local support from Age UK, the National Charity
- Responded to 6,202 enquiries via phone, email, and website
- Delivered 1,458 Welfare Benefit appointments
- Secured £5,264,773 in Welfare Benefit take-up
- 57% of Welfare Benefit appointments took place in people's own homes
- Managed 178 home visits to support with Lasting Power of Attorney



*“After speaking to Age UK Norfolk, I felt a weight had been lifted off my shoulders... you helped me and stopped me from worrying.”*



***“Thank you so much. I would never have been able to fill the form in myself due to my sight and mental health, as I get overwhelmed. Thank you for your patience.”***

*- Welfare Benefit Service User*

# Advocacy & Money Matters

Ensuring older people have a voice and the confidence to manage their finances is central to Age UK Norfolk's work. Our Community Advocacy service, running since 2007, supports people aged 50+ who are vulnerable or in precarious situations. Advocates ensure individuals are heard, protected from discrimination, and able to remain independent.

Alongside advocacy, the Money Matters service — funded by Norfolk County Council since 1998 — helps people aged 65+ take control of household finances, administrative paperwork, and online transactions. In 2024–25, this service assisted hundreds of older people to manage their money with confidence. Looking to the future, we will refresh and renew the service to reflect evolving funding arrangements, developing a stronger goal-driven approach that encourages personal confidence, resilience, and independence, ensuring that older people continue to receive vital support to manage their finances and maintain wellbeing.

Together, the Charity's advocacy and financial support services help older people navigate complex systems, protect their rights, and build confidence, contributing to economic stability, wellbeing, and independence.

## In 2024-2025 we:

- Delivered 1,634 home visits
- Provided 2,928 hours of support
- helped individuals repay £195,215 of Norfolk County Council care fees, £181,234 of council debt, and £82,630 of personal debt
- Supported individuals to achieve personal savings of £108,155
- Supported 43 clients with NHS complaints, ensuring their concerns were addressed fairly and confidentially



# Companionship & Wellbeing

Social connection is vital for wellbeing, yet too many older people face later life feeling alone and disconnected. Changes such as bereavement, reduced mobility, and shrinking social networks can make it harder to maintain regular contact with others.


Age UK Norfolk's Befriending and Travelling Companionship services provide consistent companionship, emotional support, and opportunities to reconnect with community life.



## In 2024-2025 we:

- Made 10,592 Befriending calls (that's 3,327 hours!)
- Supported 196 Befriending members
- Provided 150 Travelling Companionship sessions to 82 individuals
- Offered home visits, community walks, light-touch digital help, and signposting to Information & Advice through our dedicated FRIENDS project in Reepham (funded through The Norfolk Community Foundation)





***“I love speaking to her and hearing about her painting. It’s like having a friend... and I’ve never had a friend before.”***

***- Companionship Service User***

# Digital Inclusion

As more aspects of daily life move online, having the skills and confidence to use digital technology is increasingly important. Since launching in 2021, Age UK Norfolk's Digital Inclusion service has supported people aged 50+ to build confidence and independence in an increasingly digital world.

Through tailored one-to-one sessions, individuals are guided at their own pace—whether using their own device or one loaned by the charity for a 12-week period. From sending messages and making video calls to shopping online and setting up email, the service helps open up new ways to stay connected and access essential services.

Alongside direct support, the service plays an important advocacy role in protecting older people's access to essential digital infrastructure. During 2024–25, Age UK Norfolk campaigned for a delay to the rollout of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), raising concerns from service users who rely on technology for telecare, telemedicine, and maintaining social connections. This advocacy contributed to a delay of the programme from the original 2025 deadline to January 2027, helping to safeguard continuity of support for those most reliant on digital services.

Through personalised guidance, access to devices, and wider advocacy work, the Digital Inclusion service empowers older people to stay connected, access the services they need, and maintain independence in an increasingly digital world.



In 2024-2025  
we supported  
172 individuals  
across 397  
sessions



In 2024-2025 we  
provided 567 hours  
of Digital Inclusion  
support

# Age-Friendly Norfolk

**Age UK Norfolk is committed to creating an age-friendly and inclusive county where older people can live well, stay independent, and participate fully in their communities. An Age-friendly Community enables people to remain in their homes, engage in activities they value, and contribute to local life for as long as possible.**

In 2024–25, the Charity supported the North Norfolk Age-Friendly Partnership, sharing learning across the County and raising awareness to build a broader age-friendly movement. Age UK Norfolk ensured older people’s voices were heard in service development and played an active role in local health and wellbeing partnerships, advocating for their needs.

Key achievements include supporting North Norfolk District Council as the first council partner to adopt Age-friendly principles and securing a micro-grant from the Centre for Ageing Better to celebrate the International Day of Older People. Breckland Council began developing a proposal to join the UK Network of Age-Friendly Communities, while Kings Lynn & West Norfolk was designated the County’s first “Marmot Place” to reduce health inequalities.

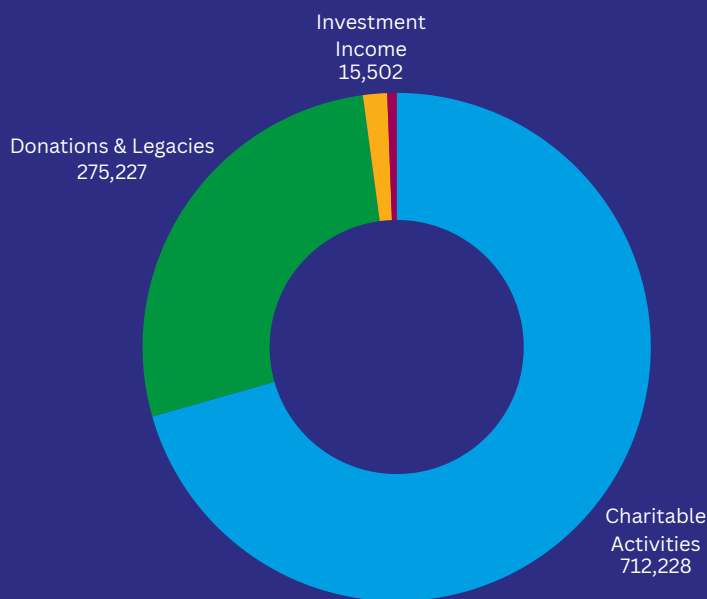
Through partnerships, campaigns, and networks, Age UK Norfolk strengthens the voice, visibility, and wellbeing of older people, supporting communities across Norfolk to be more inclusive and age-friendly.



AGE  
FRIENDLY  
NORTH  
NORFOLK

# Financial Review

The year ended 31 March 2025 saw Age UK Norfolk continue to manage its resources carefully in a challenging economic environment, ensuring services remain sustainable and responsive to the needs of older people. The Charity reported a deficit of £180,522 for the year (in contrast to a surplus in 2023–24), reflecting the ongoing balance between delivering demand-led services and managing budget pressures.



## Income

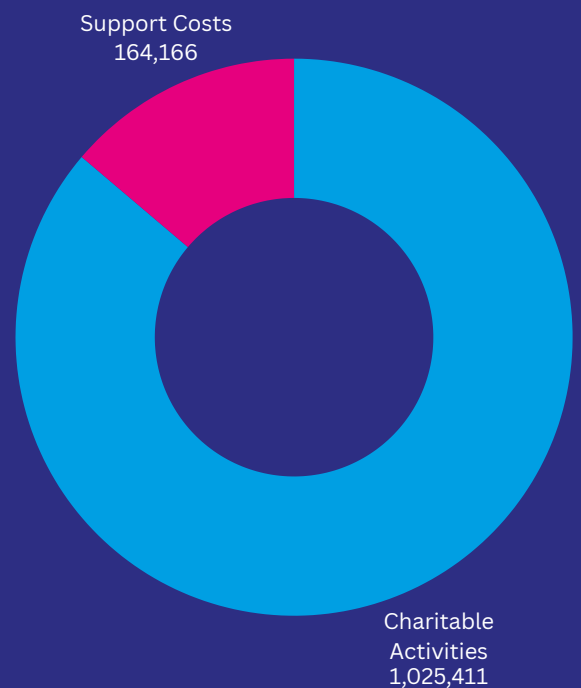
During the year, total incoming resources amounted to **£1,009,051**, which represents a decrease of £429,144 compared with the previous year's income. This change was primarily due to a reduction in grant income and donations.

- Charitable activities income declined, partly due to changes in grant funding.
- Donations and legacies income decreased from the prior year, reflecting normal year-on-year fluctuations in supporter giving.
- Investment income remained modest, with balances held prudently in low interest-bearing accounts to safeguard working capital.

## Expenditure

Total resources expended for the year were **£1,189,573**, a reduction compared with the previous year's expenditure, although expenditure exceeded income. This reflects a deliberate decision by the Board of Trustees to draw down on reserves built up from generous legacies in previous years in order to maintain frontline services.

The Finance Team and Trustees have continued to oversee robust financial planning and risk management, prioritising delivery of services to older people while safeguarding the Charity's long-term sustainability.



# Achievements Overview

Supported individuals to make savings of £108,155

1,634  
Advocacy  
home visits

10,592  
Befriending  
calls

213 referrals  
for support  
with Lasting  
Power of  
Attorney

Helped to  
secure £5.2m  
in Welfare  
Benefits for  
older people

150 Travelling  
Companionship  
Sessions

We provided  
1,458 Benefit  
appointments

# Volunteering Spotlight

In 2024-2025:

- We had 180 active volunteers
- Our volunteers provided 9,780 hours of support
- We had 81 volunteers who have been with us for over 5 years

**For many people, volunteering begins with a quiet moment of reflection. For Age UK Norfolk volunteer Beth Victory, that moment came after a personal loss.**

“My motivation for coming forward for volunteering with Age UK Norfolk this year was a realisation I was just ‘coasting through’ day to day,” Beth explains. “I sadly lost my dad in October 2023, and it shook up how I felt about life and what I was doing.”

Like many of us, Beth had a list of things she hoped to do “one day”. Losing her dad changed how she viewed time. “Dad dying made me fully comprehend and appreciate you don’t know how much time you have and life is so precious,” she says. “It was about time I actually started doing some things on my to-do list.”

“For as long as I can remember I have always felt so concerned for older people who are alone or feeling lonely,” Beth says. Time constraints had previously made volunteering feel unrealistic, until a conversation with a friend changed everything. “I had a friend that had shared her experiences of volunteering at Age UK Norfolk, and I knew straight away this was something I wanted to do and it was perfect as it could easily fit into my week.”

Beth now volunteers as a telephone befriender, making weekly calls to a member she was matched with. “We just chat about her week, gardening, any outings and usually squeeze in a good gossip about the soaps!” she says.

The impact is clear. “I often hear my befriending member say, ‘Oh that was so good’ when she goes to put the phone down,” Beth shares. “She always says, ‘Thank you so much, you’ve really brightened my spirits and lifted me’.”



“Sharing kindness is so important”

Volunteering has changed Beth’s outlook. “I am so pleased I stopped thinking ‘I don’t have time’ and just went for it,” she says. “Sharing kindness is so important – as the saying goes, ‘In a world where you can be anything, be kind’.”

As Beth reflects, “I am not sure who gets more pleasure from the calls!”

**If you feel inspired by Adele’s story and would like to find out more about volunteering with Age UK Norfolk, contact our Volunteer Coordinator:**

- 01603 785 210
- [volunteering@ageuknorfolk.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ageuknorfolk.org.uk)
- [www.ageuknorfolk.org.uk](http://www.ageuknorfolk.org.uk)



# Supporting our Work

In addition to successful grant applications, Age UK Norfolk was fortunate to receive over £275,000 in donations and legacies during 2024–25. This generous support helped us continue providing vital services and support to older people across Norfolk.

## We were grateful to be supported by:

- Sky Community Cares Fund
- The Clan Trust
- Norfolk Community Foundation
- The Charles Littlewood Hill Trust
- Age UK (the national charity)
- R.C. Snelling Charitable Trust
- The Earl of Northampton's Charity

We were also delighted to take part in Dunelm's Delivering Joy programme, where customers generously purchased Christmas gifts for those in need. These thoughtful donations were distributed to some of our service users, helping to bring comfort and a sense of connection during the festive season.

The Charity also benefited from the incredible efforts of community fundraisers, including:

- Participants in the Autumn Blickling Half Marathon
- Supporters of the Aylsham Christmas Tree Festival.

Every gift, whether large or small, and every fundraising effort, makes a real difference in the lives of older people. Thanks to our funders and community supporters, we can continue offering services that help people stay connected, independent, and supported in later life.

## Interested in fundraising for Age UK Norfolk?

You can download our [Fundraising Guide](#) for more ideas and information or contact our fundraising team at [fundraising@ageuknorfolk.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@ageuknorfolk.org.uk)

[ageuknorfolk.org.uk](http://ageuknorfolk.org.uk)



# Supporting our Work

Support us as your  
'Charity of the Year'  
at work



Volunteer  
with us



Host a  
Fundraiser



Make a  
Donation



**For more information:**

Visit our website [ageuknorfolk.org.uk](http://ageuknorfolk.org.uk),  
contact our fundraising team  
on 01603 787 111 or email  
[fundraising@ageuknorfolk.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@ageuknorfolk.org.uk)

# Supporting our work

“The help on the phone and during my home visit has been so excellent. It has been such a positive experience at this difficult time for me.

I hope your organisation gets to help more people like me. Forever grateful.”

## Legacy gifts change lives.

Find out how you can be part of making Norfolk a great place to grow older:

✉ [fundraising@ageuknorfolk.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@ageuknorfolk.org.uk)

🌐 [www.ageuknorfolk.org.uk](http://www.ageuknorfolk.org.uk)



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
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