



2025/26

SOCIAL IMPACT

REPORT

**Changing the lives of older
people across Northumberland**

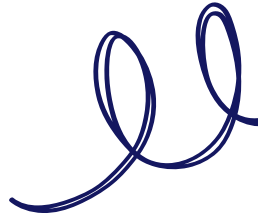
Promoting Independence and Wellbeing for Older People in Northumberland

Over the past year, older adults have faced a range of ongoing challenges that have impacted their wellbeing, independence, and quality of life. Rising household costs and a growing reliance on digital services have created additional difficulties for many older people as they adapt to a rapidly changing society.

Social isolation, barriers to accessing healthcare and support services, and financial uncertainty have further intensified existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. These circumstances highlight the importance of listening to, supporting, and empowering older individuals, while taking meaningful steps to address the challenges they continue to experience within their communities.



The year in review



Like many charitable organisations, Age UK Northumberland has seen a significant increase in demand for its services while continuing to operate within an increasingly difficult financial climate.

The ongoing cost-of-living pressures have affected every area of service delivery, from rising operational and travel expenses, to increased competition for grants, fundraising opportunities, and public donations.

APRIL 2024
TO MARCH 2025

5,428

PEOPLE SUPPORTED

APRIL 2025
TO MARCH 2026

5,812

PEOPLE SUPPORTED



8%

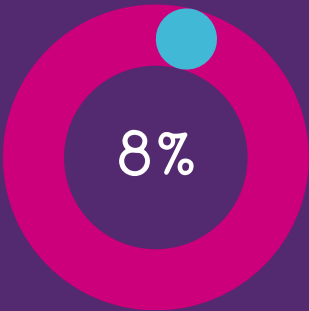
INCREASE
IN SUPPORT PROVIDED
YEAR ON YEAR

“This year has been incredibly challenging for many older people across Northumberland, with many facing loneliness, rising costs, and uncertainty. As our ageing population continues to grow faster than the national average, we recognise the importance of adapting our services to meet the changing needs of older people across the county.

What continues to inspire me is the kindness and resilience shown by our communities, staff, volunteers, and supporters every day. We have greatly valued hearing feedback from older people and families about the difference our support has made — providing not only practical help, but also reassurance and friendship.

I am immensely proud of the compassion and dedication shown by everyone involved with Age UK Northumberland. Thank you to everyone who has helped us continue making a real difference to the lives of older people across the county.”

Amy Whyte, Chief Executive



Increase in number of contacts from 2023/2024 to 2024/2025

90,704

Number of contacts with clients

66

Groups and services were running during 2025/2026

Projects

Details

Outcome

Impact

Advocacy

Giving people a voice, ensuring their wishes are heard and needs met

- Clients were supported with issues such as housing, social care, tribunals, medical diagnosis and benefits appeals.

141

Clients supported

Bereavement Counselling

Therapies to help people overcome the loss of a loved one

- Supported clients with 12-weeks of counselling sessions
- Provided an estimated 100 hours of training for 7 volunteer counsellors

71

Clients supported

Day Care

Activities and companionship for older people who need a little extra support

- Daily activities including exercises, dementia groups, crafts and music

43

Clients supported



Projects	Details	Outcome	Impact
Dementia Groups - Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy	Groups for people living with mild to moderate dementia which help to improve mood, memory and movement	• 5 weekly groups running in Alnwick, Ashington, Morpeth, Ponteland and Cramlington • Providing respite and support to carers	43 Clients supported
Friendship Line	A weekly chat with a friendly volunteer for people who are feeling lonely and isolated	• 96 clients received a regular call from their volunteer befriender • The service was supported by 24 volunteers	96 Clients supported
Gym	A small and welcoming gym	• Support to help clients develop strength, balance and overall fitness	42 Members registered
Health and Wellbeing	Weekly exercise classes running throughout the county tailored for older people	• 17 qualified volunteer exercise instructors	14,310 Contacts during the year
Homecare	Care at home that enables people to live well and independently in their own home	• Supported 460 clients with care services including personal care, cleaning and enabling services	360,166 Care calls completed during the year
Information and Advice	Helping people to maximise income, plan for the future, apply for blue badges, and access support with social care, housing and general advice	• The team supported 2,007 clients during 2025/2026 • Accessed £3,168,968.59 in benefits for clients across the county	10.09 % Increase on 2025-2026 figures



Projects

Details

Outcome

impact

Prison Service Support

Supporting older prisoners and their family at HMP Northumberland

- Older prisoners and their family accessed - information and advice, dementia and health and wellbeing support

132

Contacts each month

Scams Awareness

Supporting people who have been a victim of a scam / helping to build awareness and resilience

- Supported clients across Northumberland with scams advice and support through one- to-one meetings and presentations

1,038

Clients supported

Social Groups

14 social groups throughout Northumberland providing friendship, activities and support

- 304 members regularly attending groups
- Arranged trips to Newcastle Racecourse and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea

7,252

Contacts during the year

Veterans Support

Support for veterans across the county, connecting them with services

- Support connecting Veterans with services
- Continued Breakfast Group and Friendship Line service for Veterans

240

Contacts supported

Warm Welcome

Helping out with a warm meal, essentials and access to a emergency funding

- Funded meal for those struggling with cost of living
- Anonymous help yourself shelf
- Clothing and items to keep warm

18,778

Meals provided



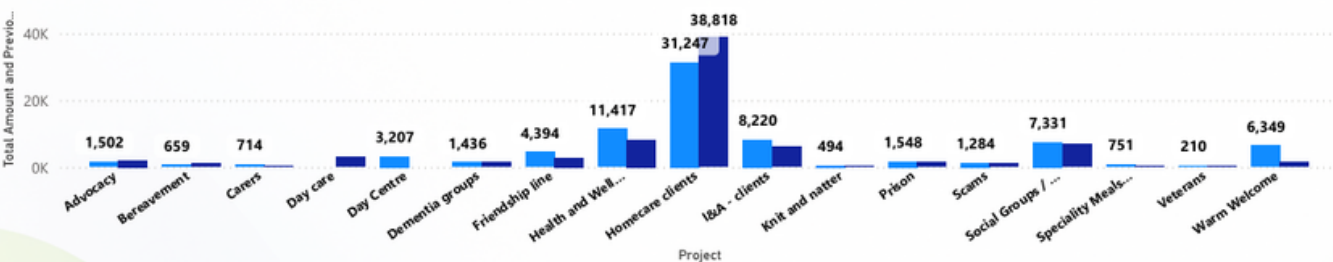
The impact of our services in the community

Showing comparison of 2024/2025



Total Contacts

● Total Amount ● Previous Financial Year Amount



81K

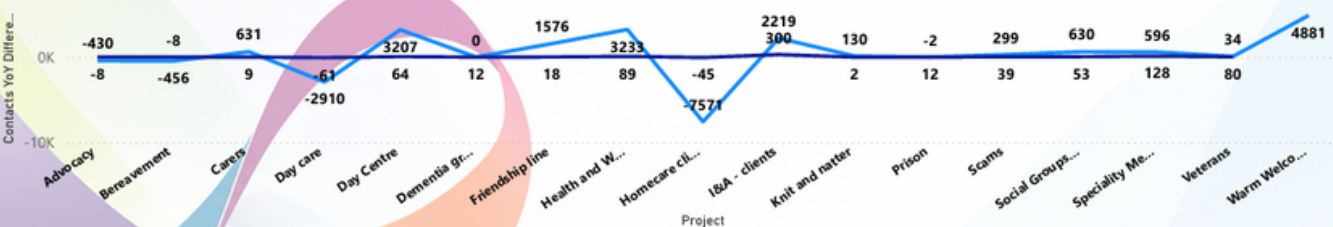
Total Contacts CY

75K

Previous Financial Year A...

Contacts YoY Difference and Individuals YoY Difference by Project

● Contacts YoY Difference ● Individuals YoY Difference



Financial Year

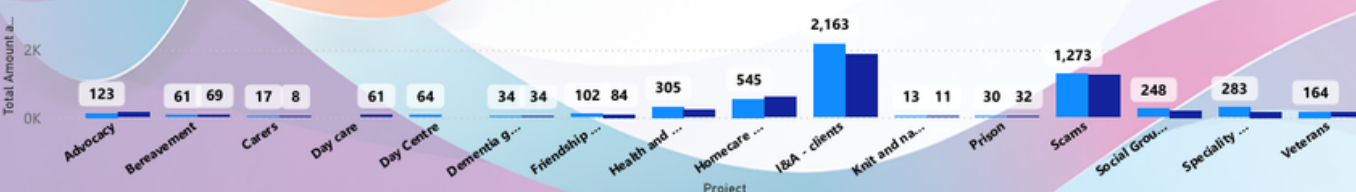
☐ 2023/2024

☒ 2024/2025

☐ 2025/2026

Total Individuals

● Total Amount ● Previous Financial Year Amount



4,813

Previous Financial Year A...

5,425

Total Individuals CY

Client Story:

"I had big problems with an energy supplier and got bogged down. My advocate took on the case, she fought tooth and nail and never let up. She waded through Eon and won my case. I would like to thank her very much and Age UK Northumberland"

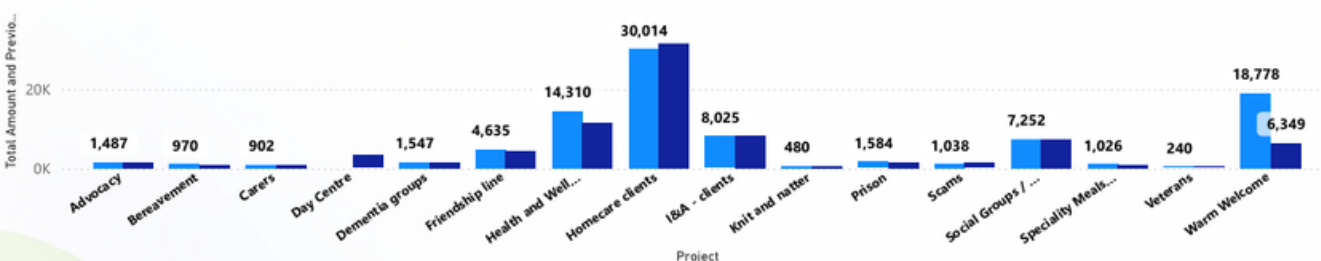
The impact of our services in the community

Showing comparison of 2025/2026 figures



Total Contacts

● Total Amount ● Previous Financial Year Amount



92K

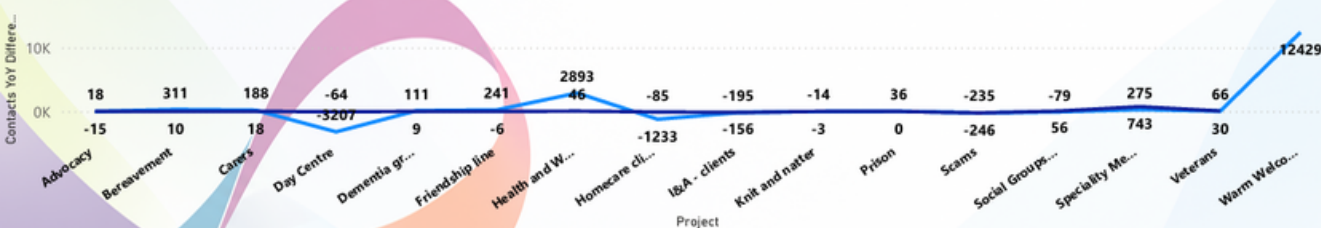
Total Contacts CY

81K

Previous Financial Year ...

Contacts YoY Difference and Individuals YoY Difference by Project

● Contacts YoY Difference ● Individuals YoY Difference



Financial Year

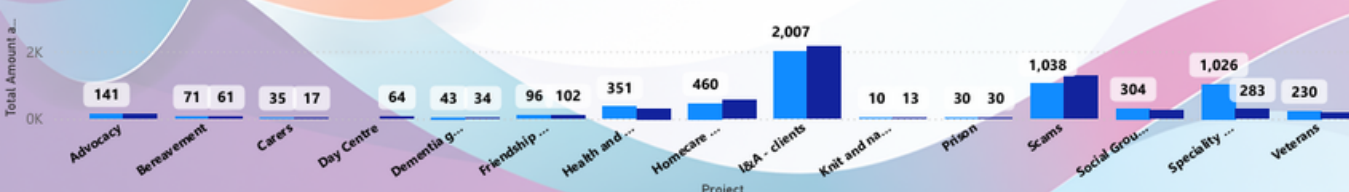
☐ 2023/2024

☐ 2024/2025

☒ 2025/2026

Total Individuals

● Total Amount ● Previous Financial Year Amount



5,425
Previous Financial Year ...

5,842
Total Individuals CY

Summary

Increase in
individuals supported

451

Increase in
contacts

13,148

Our Charitable Services team delivers personalised support tailored to each individual's needs. Through home visits and compassionate guidance, we help older people overcome challenges and access the support they need.

Welfare Benefits Accessed on behalf of clients by our Information and Advice Team

Showing comparison of 2024/25 and 2025/26 figures



During 2025–2026, continued increases in household living costs have continued to place significant financial pressure on many older people across Northumberland. While support has been expanded for some pensioners, many older residents still face uncertainty around heating costs and day-to-day essentials.

As a result, increasing numbers of older adults have sought financial advice and support for the first time, with many admitting they had previously been reluctant to ask for help. The ongoing financial pressures facing pensioners have also made access to support services increasingly important. We have seen the highest levels of benefit claims and requests for assistance to date, reflecting heightened levels of need linked directly to rising living costs. Many older residents are now relying more heavily on advice services, welfare support, and community-based assistance to help manage everyday expenses and maintain their wellbeing.

Client Case Study - Supporting a Client to Maximise Income and Improve Quality of Life

An older lady living alone in a shared ownership bungalow was referred for benefits advice. Her only income was her State Pension, and she was receiving partial support with her rent and council tax. Although she initially believed she would not qualify for additional benefits, a full assessment identified that a successful Attendance Allowance claim could significantly improve her financial situation.

With her consent, an Attendance Allowance application was completed and submitted, alongside supporting medical evidence. The client was subsequently awarded the higher rate of Attendance Allowance at £108.55 per week, together with a backdated payment of £1,411.15. This enabled her to clear outstanding debts and significantly reduced her financial stress.

Following the award, further benefit calculations identified entitlement to Pension Credit Guarantee Credit, increased Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. A Pension Credit application was submitted, resulting in an award of £317.70 per month and a backdated payment of £862.95. The client also became eligible for additional passported benefits, including help with NHS dental treatment.

During the initial home visit, concerns were also identified regarding the client's difficulty using her bath-based shower safely. She was signposted for a Care Needs Assessment and support with potential adaptations. Later, assistance was provided with a Blue Badge application, which was successful and has made travelling and attending appointments much easier.

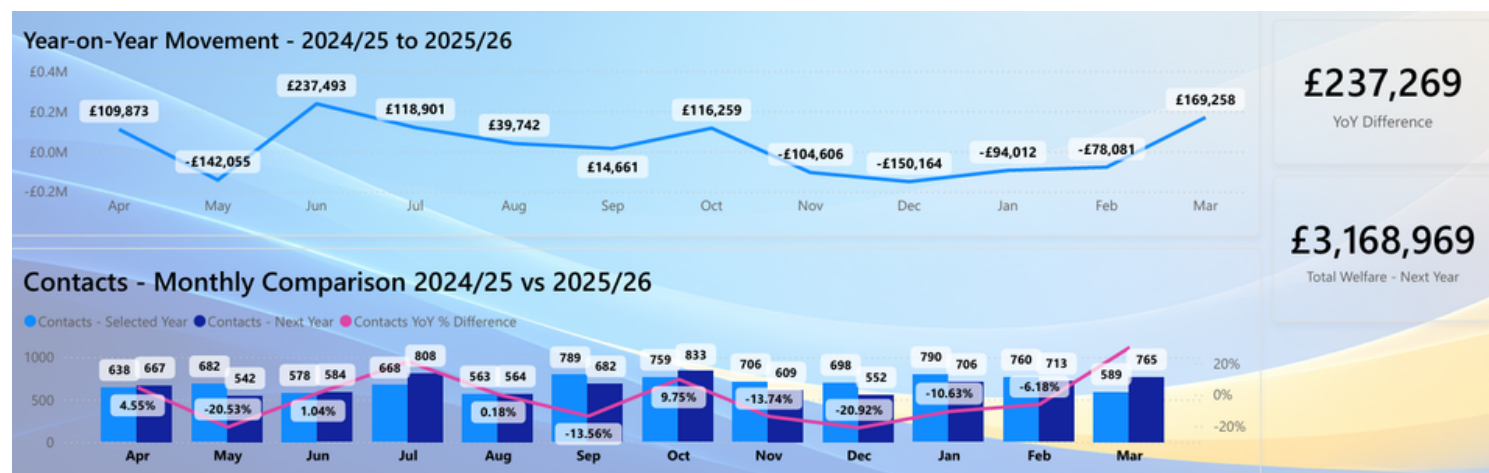
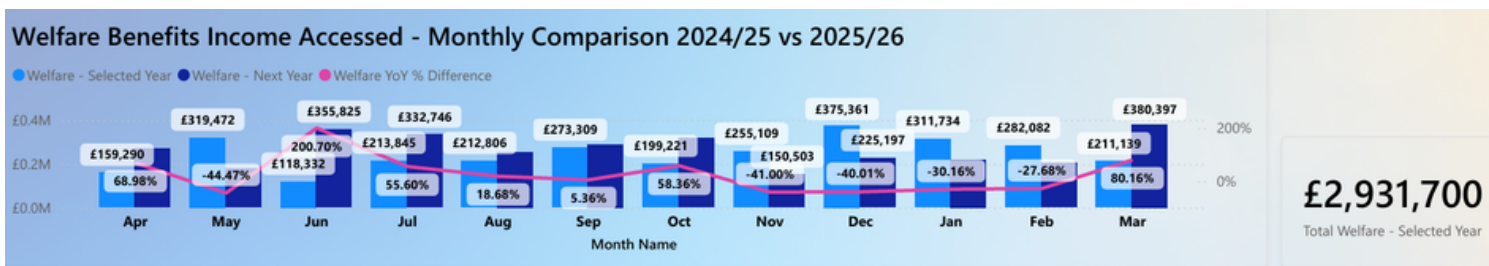
The client described herself as “over the moon” with the support received. The advice and advocacy provided significantly improved her financial security, reduced anxiety, increased her independence and improved her overall quality of life. At case closure, she reported feeling confident managing her affairs and was extremely positive about the difference the service had made.

Welfare Benefits Accessed on behalf of clients by our Information and Advice Team

Showing comparison of 2024/25 and 2025/26 figures



2024/25 - 2025/26 Comparison



Summary

2024/2025

2025/2026

% increase

£2,931,700

£3,168,968

10.09%

The difference

Our Information and Advice team provides practical, end-to-end support to help older people improve their financial wellbeing. This includes carrying out benefit checks, identifying available entitlements, and assisting with applications to ensure clients can access the support they are eligible for.

By helping to reduce financial stress and improve stability, these services continue to have a positive impact on the overall wellbeing, confidence, and quality of life of the older people we support.

"I'm really grateful for all the help and support from the team. The forms were so complicated and difficult to manage while dealing with my health problems, but they made everything much easier and less stressful. Being able to do it all from home was a huge help. Everyone was so kind, patient, and efficient throughout."

Here's what our Charitable Services clients had to say...

Information & Advice Client

"Since receiving Attendance Allowance, I can now heat my home, afford better groceries, and pay for extra help. The support has made a huge difference. Lisa was professional and treated me with dignity and respect throughout my claim — many thanks to her and the team."

Bereavement Client

"The sessions helped me to 'open up' and discuss my feelings, rather than bottling everything up."

Social Group Client

"I've experienced a lot of lovely things in my life but one of the most enjoyable has been coming to the Age UK friendship group. The care and friendship has been really great."

Health & Wellbeing Client

"I've found your Thursday exercise class incredibly helpful in my recovery from knee surgery last August. After struggling to find suitable support through my GP and physiotherapy, discovering this class online was a real turning point. It has given me a huge boost both physically and mentally, and I really appreciate it."

Advocacy client

"I didn't understand any of it. I've never had to deal with these things before as my husband dealt with everything. That is brilliant, I can't believe it is all over. Thank you so much."

Friendship Line client

"Christine's call is an oasis of calm and fun friendship that makes every week easier to endure. I never feel lonely when I have my call to look forward to."

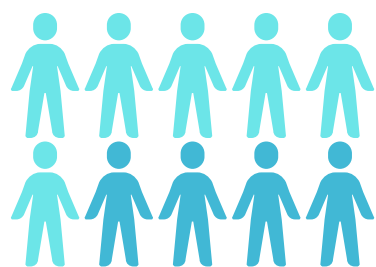
Our Social Groups

Thanks to the support of the Kellett Fund, we have continued to run our 12 social groups in Ashington, Amble, Bedlington, Blyth, Cramlington, Morpeth, Ponteland, Haltwhistle, Woodhorn and Lesbury. We have also additionally added a friendship group in Corbridge, a Kinship Care Group and a Prostate Group.

Our members meet weekly to enjoy companionship, activities, speakers, outings and of course a cuppa and a chat with their friends.



Here's what our Homecare clients had to say...



460 people enabled to live in their own home with support of enabling, cleaning, sitting and personal care services



Delivering 4774 hours of care per week



360,166 home visits during the year

Homecare client

"Our senior support worker is always helpful in every way and goes way beyond basic requirements, nothing is too much trouble and support workers are also kind and caring in every way."

Homecare Client Family

"I'm thrilled with the care I have received and my carers are worth their weight in gold, I'm always more upbeat after their call as they take their time to sit and talk to me."

The care received has also had a positive impact on my family as they are still able to go about their business, without worrying about me. Both me and my sister are very grateful to the carers."

Homecare Client

"Wonderful staff, caring, kind and considerate."

Homecare Client

"I'm overwhelmed with the care and support I receive from my support worker especially through this difficult time, I'm very grateful for their help."



Care at home

Our sincere thanks go to our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters for their continued commitment throughout 2025–2026. Your compassion and hard work have played a vital role in supporting older people across Northumberland, during an especially challenging time for many communities.

Whether through donations, grant funding, fundraising events, partnerships, or volunteering, your contribution has helped us continue providing essential support to older people when it has been needed most. Your generosity has enabled us to reach individuals facing hardship, loneliness, and financial insecurity across both rural and urban communities.

We also want to recognise the extraordinary dedication of our staff and volunteers, whose compassion, resilience, and commitment have remained at the heart of everything we do. Despite growing demand for services and increasing pressures across the charity sector, they have continued to deliver vital support to older people across Northumberland with kindness and professionalism every day.

Thank you for taking the time to read our report and for being part of our journey. Together, we are helping to create stronger, more connected communities for older people across Northumberland. If you would like to learn more about our work or ways to support us, we would be delighted to hear from you.



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