

share your warmth

Donate and support older people to be active and connected during this pandemic

Sir Muir Gray, Age UK Oxfordshire and Active Oxfordshire have once again teamed up to support the Share Your Warmth campaign. Last winter, this campaign helped to get older people more physically active and reduce isolation and loneliness. Now more than ever, your help is much needed. We want to get older people active, feeling supported and connected online. We are asking people who receive a winter fuel allowance but are able to spare it, to donate it to this year's Share your Warmth campaign.

The last campaign ended in March 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, so these donations couldn't have been more timely. The money raised made a real and immediate difference to older people in Oxfordshire. It enabled us to make 5 specialist exercise films that were designed to maintain strength and balance whilst at home, and proved popular during this time. Becoming physically deconditioned can have a huge impact on people's daily lives, e.g. not being able to walk as far or as fast or not being able to hold a full kettle of water. Sir Muir Gray said: "The bad news is that the impact of reduced activity and increased isolation makes the need for the campaign even greater. The good news is that people can become stronger, more supple and move with more stamina and skills whatever their age and no matter how many long term conditions they may have."

We sent out 1,000 home exercise packs to people without internet access and also made 3,290 phone calls to check on people's wellbeing and to motivate people to be as active as possible.

People have said to us:

"Really appreciative of these messages and the videos. Makes me get on with it!"

"I do 1 or 2 sessions every day since lock down, and have really benefited. Your varied sessions on YouTube have kept me sane (and balanced!)"

During this pandemic, older people are understandably being far more cautious about socialising, which in turn is taking its toll on mental health. Many regular social activities have not resumed, meaning that feelings of loneliness are even more

pronounced. For older people, this realisation can be quite hard hitting, with many people saying they are feeling a sense of loss of hope.

For younger people, adapting to a new life online may be easier than for someone who is unfamiliar with technology, increasing the feeling of being cut off. We aim to change that and make a difference to as many people as we can.

Malcolm donated his winter fuel allowance during the last campaign. He said: "I saw an article about Sir Muir Gray's appeal on behalf of Age UK Oxfordshire and Active Oxfordshire. I also watched his video on YouTube and decided it was just what I had had in mind for my unwanted winter fuel supplement. I retired from a London university some 15 years ago and am fortunate to have a good pension. This allows me to have holidays abroad and trips to museums and theatres in Oxford [pre-COVID]. After a lifetime of cycling and walking holidays, I know the benefits of an active life. Not only is it beneficial for our physical health but ones mental health. If donating my winter fuel supplement can be of help assisting their aim to get those less well off than myself to be more active and also improve their contact with others, we all know how loneliness can be such a devastating thing for the elderly and unfortunately it is all too common. I would encourage anyone whose personal circumstances are similar to mine, to donate their winter fuel supplement to this worthy cause."

By donating your £200 you would:

- Support 20 housebound people to do chair-based exercises at home with a home exercise pack
- Support 40 older people to attend an online tailored group exercise class, keeping them active, mobile and socially connected
- Enable 100 housebound older people in Oxfordshire to receive a friendly phone call

Sir Muir Gray, Age UK Oxfordshire and Active Oxfordshire are working together to help older people be as active and as connected as possible to benefit both physical and mental health.

Age UK Oxfordshire's Deputy CEO Nigel Gowing said:

"This is a terrific initiative that will make a real difference to older people in Oxfordshire. The ever changing rules can make it difficult to maintain activity levels at any age, but physical exercise is proven to be highly beneficial to both physical and mental wellbeing. So we need to do everything we can to support older people to remain fit, healthy and connected, and we are immensely grateful to everyone who is able to support this campaign."

Paul Brivio, Chief Executive of Active Oxfordshire, said:

"Staying physically active and connected is more important than ever during these challenging times. We're delighted to play our part in re-launching Share your Warmth to help older people across the county stay active and protect their physical and mental well-being. Your support really will change lives – thank you."

Visit the Just Giving page to donate via <https://justgiving.com/campaign/warmth>.

Or please send a cheque to: **Fundraising, Age UK Oxfordshire, 9 Napier Court, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3YT. For any queries please contact Anna McKay via annamckay@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or call 0345 450 1276.**

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Notes to Editors

About Age UK Oxfordshire

Age UK Oxfordshire is an independent local charity dedicated to giving older people in Oxfordshire comfort, support and opportunities and enabling them to love later life. We provide free local information, advice and support. We work with our national partner, Age UK, and our local Age UK partners in England. You can find further information on all our services and volunteering opportunities by telephoning 0345 450 1276 or by visiting our website: www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire. Age UK Oxfordshire is a charitable company limited by guarantee (registered charity number 1091529 and company number 4328143)

About Active Oxfordshire

We help people in the most need across Oxfordshire by working with partners to increase physical activity. Ours aims are to:

- Improve the mental wellbeing of people in Oxfordshire through Physical Activity
- Increase Physical Activity levels of the most inactive children and young people
- Increase Physical Activity levels of those with long-term health conditions or disability
- Decrease levels of inactivity among older people
- Focus on places with the highest levels of inactivity

Charity No. 1179040