



Share your Warmth: help tackle loneliness and enable older people to be more active this winter

Local charities Age UK Oxfordshire and Active Oxfordshire have come together to bring back the Share your Warmth campaign, at a time when it is needed more than ever before. As we head into winter during an unprecedented pandemic, thousands of older people in Oxfordshire are at great risk of isolation, loneliness and inactivity.

Share your warmth, now in its second year, is a campaign that aims specifically to help older people to be more active as well as enabling them to get connected and feel supported. We are asking older people in Oxfordshire who feel able to spare their winter fuel allowance to donate it to [Share your Warmth](#) and transform the lives of vulnerable older people in our community. We also welcome donations of any amount, so that we can all come together to fight inactivity, loneliness and isolation this winter.

Devastating impact of COVID-19

As a result of being told to shield, remain indoors, not to go out shopping – many older people have become afraid to leave their homes. Most older people have followed the rules and done just that – stayed at home. However, the flipside of doing this has resulted in high levels of inactivity (for all ages), however, the effects for older people are far more detrimental.

Deconditioning, the loss of function and muscle mass, joint pain, as well as pain resulting from untreated conditions due to the pandemic has meant that many people are no longer able to do everyday tasks.

Since vaccines are not yet widely available and there is no single treatment, tailored physical activity represents the single most impactful way in which older people can reduce the risk of developing severe Covid-19, improve recovery, and limit deconditioning and frailty as a result of home confinement.

A recent study* by Age UK during lockdown shows that 2.3 million older people feel less steady on their feet and many are more dependent on walking aids than before.

Mental health is one of our biggest concerns for older people this winter. The stress, uncertainty, isolation and loneliness, coupled with the anxiety about actually catching the virus and possibly dying is having a huge impact on older people's mental health. 34% (4.2 million people) said they felt more anxious since the start of the pandemic.

- In the last 7 days, 37% of people over the age of 70 have not left their home at all or have only left for work, exercise, basic needs, or health reasons.
- 1 in 20 people aged over 70 have not left their home at all. The proportion of over 70s experiencing depression has doubled since the start of the pandemic."

Some people feel that there is nothing to live for, no purpose or pleasure and some even had thoughts of suicide. Please let this sink in.

How your donations make a difference

Share your warmth aims to combat these very real and very serious challenges that our older people are facing. We want to support people in as much of a practical and emotional way as we possibly can.

For those most isolated and not connected to the internet, we will send out home exercise packs containing DVDs, exercise booklets and [from January] exercise bands to people at home. We will make friendly phone calls to check in on people and gently motivate them to do a little bit of exercise.

For anyone who does have access to the internet, we will support them to get online to join one of our Exercise classes by Zoom that always finish with a group chat and opportunity to socialise. If anyone is hesitant or never tried Zoom we will offer them one to one support to get them online to join a class, and of course once they have the skills to Zoom they can use it to connect with friends and family too!

"I'm a lot weaker now than before. I've lost a lot of strength. You've saved me." – Zoom Exercise class participant

If you would like to donate to support this campaign, you can do so via JustGiving <https://justgiving.com/campaign/warmth>

For further information, please contact annamckay@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

Notes for editors

Full report linked for ['The impact of COVID-19 to date on older people's mental and physical health'*](#)

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

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