

Age UK Oxfordshire's Magazine

EngAGE

Practical tips to keep your home warm

Shining a light on domestic abuse

Finding friendship after loss

We are a local independent charity improving the lives of older people across Oxfordshire.

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www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire



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Welcome from our CEO, Paul Ringer.



As winter sets in, looking
after both your home
and your health
becomes more
important than ever.

In this issue, you'll find practical advice on
keeping your home warm and tips to
support your physical and mental wellbeing
through the winter months.

We're also shining a light on an issue that
too often remains hidden—domestic abuse.
With cases rising and our population ageing,
creating a safer society for older people is
urgent. You'll find information on p.16 about
how you can help by becoming a DA Friend.

I'd like to thank everyone who took part in
the consultation for our new strategy. We
heard from over 400 people, including many
of you.

Your voices have shaped a plan grounded
in evidence, lived experience and a shared
belief that later life should be defined by
strength—not by struggles.

Together, we can create a fairer later life for
older people in Oxfordshire—one rooted in
dignity, connection and opportunity for all.
Thank you for being part of this journey.

With warm wishes,

Paul





Keeping your home warm

As the colder months arrive, keeping your home warm isn't just about comfort—it's about your health. Staying warm helps reduce the risk of colds, flu, and more serious problems like heart attacks and strokes.

Here are some top tips for keeping your home warm:

- Try to heat the rooms you use most—such as your living room and bedroom—to at least 18°C, and keep bedroom windows closed at night.
- Close doors to unused rooms to help hold in heat.
- Check your heating and appliances are working safely, and make sure smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are fitted and tested.



Through our partnership with SGN, we're helping older people and their carers stay safe and warm at home by offering free carbon monoxide detectors, advice on gas and energy safety and information on entitlements and home energy efficiency improvements. Contact us on **0345 450 1276** for information.

Better Housing Better Health provides free support to improve comfort and reduce energy costs, including emergency fuel vouchers, home energy visits and energy-efficient items. Find out more at www.bhbh.org.uk or call **0800 107 0044**.

Signing up to the free Priority Services Register (PSR) also means that you receive priority support if ever you're without electricity, gas, or water in an emergency or because of planned work. Find out more by visiting www.thepsr.co.uk or call us at Age UK Oxfordshire on **0345 450 1276** and we can register you.



Age UK Oxfordshire Winter Appeal

As the days grow shorter and the cold sets in, winter brings more than just frosty mornings – it deepens the hidden crisis facing thousands of older people across Oxfordshire. Behind closed doors, many will spend the season in silence, facing loneliness, poverty and a lack of support. This is happening here, in our community – together, we can change it.

Loneliness is one of the most pressing issues affecting older people today. In Oxfordshire, an estimated 10,000 people aged 65 and over are affected. For some, a whole week can pass without speaking to a single friend or family member.

The phone doesn't ring — not even on Christmas Day. This isolation isn't just emotionally painful; it's dangerous. Loneliness is linked to poor physical and mental health, and older people experiencing it are 25% more likely to develop dementia.



Loneliness is especially common in our more deprived communities. But it doesn't have to be this way – with the right support, people can feel connected again.

At Age UK Oxfordshire, we're working to change this. Our team provides friendship calls, in-person visits and practical help to bring warmth and companionship to those who need it most. A simple conversation can lift someone's spirits. A regular visit can restore a sense of belonging. Your support helps make this happen.

But loneliness is only part of the picture. Poverty is rising among older people, and winter makes it worse. One in ten people aged 65+ in Oxfordshire are on a low income, and 3,500 live in areas among the most deprived nationally.

Many are forced to choose between heating and eating—a heartbreaking reality in a county often seen as one of the wealthiest in the UK.

As well as the impact of loneliness, many local older people continue to face rising costs, declining health and limited access to support. Too many miss out on the benefits they're entitled to, simply because they don't know where to turn.

That's where we step in. We offer tailored advice, information about benefits and emergency grants, and practical support to help older people stay safe, warm and financially secure. We believe no one should face poverty in silence—and no one should have to navigate later life alone.

Together, we can build a fairer later life for Oxfordshire. One where ageing is not feared, but embraced with dignity, connection and opportunity.

Your donation today would ensure more local people receive support, and bring hope to those who need it most.

Bring hope to those who need it most - please help local older people facing loneliness and financial hardship this winter.

To donate, visit www.justgiving.com/campaign/winter-appeal-2025, or scan the QR code.

You can also donate up to £20 by texting OXON followed by your donation amount to **70460** to give that amount. For example, text OXON 10 to **70460** to donate £10. Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message.



Remember, we're here to help. If you or someone you know is feeling lonely or finding it difficult to manage day-to-day costs, please get in touch by calling **0345 450 1276** or email contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk.

Bernie's story

Bernie is in her 80s and lives alone in a flat she can't leave because of chronic pain and mobility issues. Once active and independent, she became housebound and deeply isolated. On top of this, she worried about her finances and how she'd afford her shopping in the long term.

We helped Bernie reconnect with her community, arranged a benefits check to make sure she's getting everything she's entitled to, and gave her back a sense of security and hope.

But Bernie isn't alone. There are many more people like her who need our help this winter. With your support, we can reach them too—ensuring they feel less isolated, more secure, and able to live with dignity.

Please help us support more people like Bernie.



Advertisement

Trusted **care** in the home they **love**.

At TrustonTap, we connect your family with compassionate local carers who provide personalised support with dignity and warmth.

Real Care. Real Relationships.

We match your loved one with carers who truly connect with them – consistent, reliable support from experienced professional carers.

- ✓ 25% more affordable than agencies
- ✓ No rushed visits – minimum one-hour

Hourly Care • Overnight Care • Live-in Care

TrustonTap - Where care feels like family
01865 951350 • TrustonTap.com

Could Homesharing be for you?

Homeshare is a safe, mutually beneficial arrangement that brings together people with a spare room who would like companionship or a little help at home, with people seeking affordable accommodation and happy to lend a hand.

Each Householder is carefully matched with someone who can provide up to 10 hours a week of practical support and friendly companionship. This might include helping with meals, small household or garden tasks, offering a hand with technology—or simply sharing a chat over a cup of tea. Homeshare does not include personal care.

All matches are carefully checked with references and DBS checks. Once a match is agreed, we create a simple agreement and stay in touch to support the arrangement.

Whether you have a spare room or are looking for affordable accommodation and a chance to help someone, or know someone who is, **Homeshare Oxfordshire** could be the answer.

Visit www.homeshareoxfordshire.org.uk or call **01865 410 670** to find out more.



Homeshare
Oxfordshire

A service provided by





Stay active and safe this winter

As the days grow colder and darker, it's natural to want to stay indoors and take things easy. But gentle movement each day can help you stay strong, steady and confident, especially during winter when slips and falls are more common.

We understand that icy pavements, bulky winter clothes and shorter days can make getting around feel more difficult. That's why it's so important to keep your body moving in safe and manageable ways. Staying active helps maintain your strength, balance and mobility—all of which play a big part in preventing falls and keeping your independence.

Introducing Stay Strong and Steady

If you're feeling unsure about your balance or just want to feel more confident on your feet, our Stay Strong and Steady programme is here to help. This free introductory exercise and information programme is designed especially for older adults and is delivered by friendly, trained specialists across Oxfordshire.



Here's what you can expect:

- One group class each week at a local community venue, led by a specially trained instructor.
- Support and resources to help you do two more sessions at home each week.
- Exercises that focus on strength and balance, helping you feel steadier, improve posture, and make everyday tasks easier.
- Helpful discussions during the group sessions about lifestyle, health and home safety tips to reduce your risk of falling.

As you grow stronger and more confident, we'll support you to move on to our regular community Strength and Balance classes, where you can continue to build on your progress.

Where you can join

Our Stay Strong and Steady programme takes place in venues across Oxfordshire, including: Abingdon, Banbury, Barton, Benson, Bicester, Chipping Norton, Didcot, Faringdon, Kidlington, Thame, Wantage, Witney and Wolvercote.

We're here to help

If you're interested or just want to chat about whether this programme might be right for you, we'd love to hear from you. Please call **01235 849 403** or email **active@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk**.



The power of a phone call

At Age UK Oxfordshire, we know that a simple phone call can make a world of difference. That's why our Phone Friends service has become such a vital part of our work—offering regular, friendly chats from a telephone befriender to older people who may be feeling isolated or lonely.

Since its launch, the service has grown into a lifeline for hundreds of people across the county, providing companionship, reassurance and a sense of connection.

Our dedicated volunteers are at the heart of Phone Friends. They generously give their time to build meaningful relationships with the people they call, often forming lasting bonds.

Many of our volunteers tell us they get just as much out of the calls as the people they support. It's a simple idea, but one that continues to have a profound impact.

Introducing Carers Phone Friends

Building on this success, we're excited to share news of a new initiative from our sister organisation, Carers Oxfordshire. This winter, they are launching Carers Phone Friends—a service designed specifically to support unpaid carers across Oxfordshire.

Caring for a loved one can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be isolating. According to the State of Caring 2023 survey, 50% of unpaid carers report feeling lonely. Carers Phone Friends aims to change that by offering regular, friendly phone calls from trained volunteers who understand the challenges of caring.

Volunteers will be matched with an unpaid carer in their community and will provide a listening ear, peer support and companionship.

In the same way as volunteering for our Phone Friends service, supporting Carers Phone Friends is a flexible opportunity that fits around your schedule—whether you can spare a few hours a week or more. Volunteers receive full training and ongoing support from a friendly, experienced team.

If you'd like to make a real difference in someone's life—just by picking up the phone—we'd love to hear from you.

Whether you're interested in supporting an older person who may be feeling lonely, or an unpaid carer who could use a friendly voice and a listening ear, we can help you find the opportunity that's right for you.

Many unpaid carers are older themselves, and a regular chat can bring comfort, connection and joy to both sides of the call.

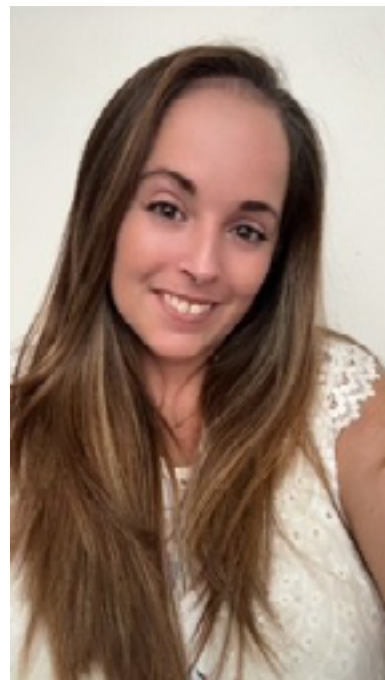
Meet Laura, Carers Phone Friends Project Worker

We're delighted to welcome Laura as the new Project Worker for Carers Phone Friends. Laura brings a wealth of experience to the role, having been part of the Age UK Oxfordshire family for eight years.

"I've seen the difference a regular visit or phone call can make," says Laura. "Sometimes, just knowing someone is there to listen can completely change someone's week."

"That's why I'm really excited to be part of this new service. I'm looking forward to working with our amazing volunteers and helping to build a network of support across Oxfordshire."

Whether you're an older person looking for a friendly voice, or a carer in need of connection, our Phone Friends services are here for you. And if you're someone who could offer that friendly voice to someone else—why not get in touch?



To find out more, call **01295 234 850** or email phonefriends@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk.

Sarah's story

Sarah, 58, lives in Didcot and cares full-time for her husband, who has a learning disability and vascular dementia. She also has her own health challenges and a mild learning disability. With little family support, Sarah often feels isolated.

Since being matched with volunteer, Margot, for regular befriending calls, their friendship has flourished.

Sarah calls Margot her "very best friend" and looks forward to their weekly chats, where she can share her worries, have a laugh, and feel truly supported.

She is very appreciative of the friendship, reassurance and support that these weekly calls provide for her.



**Names have been changed for privacy.*



Finding **friendship** after loss

Coping with the death of a loved one can be devastating, and for many it brings profound loneliness and isolation. Everyday routines change and the world can feel like an unfamiliar place.

For Sue and Jackie, both from Bicester, that isolation was very real. Sue lost her husband at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. “I didn’t know where to go or what to do,” she recalls. “I was very lonely. Even though I was having telephone counselling, it was face-to-face support I needed. Joining the group was life-changing.”

Jackie, too, found life after her husband’s death disorienting. A friend had given her a leaflet for Age UK Oxfordshire’s bereavement support group, and although it felt daunting to attend, she decided to pluck up the courage. “Walking through that door was the hardest part,” she says. “But once you’re there, you realise everyone understands why you’re there. You can share as much or as little as you want, without judgement from others.”

Their first meeting was a turning point. When Sue saw Jackie in the room, they shared a smile—and instantly clicked. From that moment, a friendship started to blossom.

Now, Sue and Jackie see each other several times a week. They’ve been on holidays together, joined other Age UK Oxfordshire activities such as lunch clubs and walks, and filled their diaries with theatre trips, shopping outings and days out.



“It’s the club that nobody ever wants to be in, but once you walk through the door, you’re in a safe space.”

Jackie

“If I hadn’t met Jackie, I don’t know where I’d be,” says Sue. “We laugh, we cry. We’ve got the support there.”

Jackie adds, “We’ve both lost our husbands much younger, and our lives were similar. We really understand how difficult it is when you’ve lost somebody you expected to share retirement with.

“It’s been nice to share that with Sue — to do the things we would have done with our husbands, but together instead.”

For both women, the bereavement groups have been a springboard into a wider community.

“Most of the groups we started with were through Age UK Oxfordshire,” says Sue. “We’ve met some lovely people and have even recommended the bereavement group to others in the same situation.”

Their advice to anyone considering attending is simple. “Pluck up all your courage and do it,” says Sue. “It’s one of the best things I’ve done.”

Jackie adds: “It’s the club that nobody ever wants to be in, but once you walk through the door, the support is there and you’re in a safe space.”

Age UK Oxfordshire runs bereavement support groups, giving you the chance to join regular walks, pub lunches, and other social activities. Our support line is also available Monday to Friday, where you can talk to one of our team members. Find details of groups on p19.

If you are aged 60 or above, have been bereaved, and would value the opportunity to meet others who understand, our groups offer a welcoming space where you can be yourself, share experiences if you wish, and find support as you navigate life after loss.

To find out more, call **01235 849 434** or email community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk.



**We’ve launched a
new group in Abingdon.
For more information
please contact us.**



Winter-proof your health

We know that winter can be a challenging time for many, so we've pulled together some useful information and resources to help you, or someone you care for, to stay as well as possible.

NHS Health Checks

A free NHS Health Check at your GP practice can help you stay healthy. These 20-30 minute appointments are a great way to spot any early signs of conditions like heart disease, stroke or diabetes.

During your check, a friendly health professional will:

- measure your height, weight and waist circumference
- check your blood pressure
- take a blood sample to check your cholesterol levels
- ask about your family medical history, lifestyle and alcohol consumption



There's no physical exam and no need to remove any clothing. It's all very straightforward. After your appointment, you'll get your results along with personalised advice to help you stay healthy.

If you're eligible, your GP practice will invite you to an NHS Health Check. If you haven't received an invitation but would like one, reach out to your GP practice to check if you qualify. You'll need to be aged 40 to 74 and not have any existing health conditions.

Healthcare options

As the winter months bring with them more respiratory illnesses like flu and RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus), Oxfordshire's hospitals are always busier than normal.

It is often best to avoid going to A&E unless you really need to. If you are feeling unwell you can get advice about the best course of action by calling **NHS 111**. In an emergency, dial **999**.

Some tips to keep you well and out of hospital include:

- Making sure you've got some medication in the house to combat those common winter illnesses.
- If you're feeling unwell, pharmacies can now supply appropriate medicines for 7 common conditions including earache, sore throat and urinary tract infections, helping to treat health issues before they get worse.

If you do need a stay in hospital, there's now a programme to support you back home more quickly to recover in familiar surroundings.

Staying in hospital for longer than needed can increase a patient's risk of picking up an infection and reduce their chance of regaining their independence.

Wherever possible, recovering at home is the best place to be.

Flu, COVID-19 and RSV vaccines

Vaccines are one of the best ways to protect yourself from serious illnesses and avoid hospital visits during the colder months.

- Flu vaccine: If you're eligible, you can get your flu jab at your GP surgery or a participating local pharmacy.
- COVID-19 vaccine: Eligible individuals can book online or visit a walk-in vaccination site.
- RSV vaccine: RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) can cause pneumonia and other serious conditions, especially in older adults. Everyone turning 75 will be offered a free RSV vaccine and if you haven't had it yet, you can have the vaccine up until you're 79. You only need 1 dose, which should protect you for several years. Contact your GP surgery to book your RSV vaccination.

Feeling out of sorts, worried or fed up?

As winter approaches, shorter days and colder weather can make it harder to get out and about, especially for those who find it tougher during this time.

One important tip is to stay connected with friends and join local events when you can, even if the weather isn't perfect. These connections help us feel supported and less isolated during the darker months.

If you're worried or feeling low, Oxfordshire Talking Therapies offers free NHS support for anxiety and depression. Their practical, short-term treatments can help you manage these feelings and improve your wellbeing.



Call today on **01865 901 222** or self-refer online at www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/oxon-talking-therapies to arrange an initial call. You can also ask your GP for a referral.

Seeing clearly matters

A recent Healthwatch survey, *Seeing Clearly? Attending Sight Tests and Accessing Opticians*, revealed that 1 in 7 people avoided having a sight test due to cost and many were unaware that financial help is available.

The report also found that people who had previously been offered additional paid-for services were twice as likely to avoid eyecare in future.

Of those surveyed, 72% were aged over 60 — meaning they are entitled to free NHS sight tests. Anyone receiving Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) can also get NHS optical vouchers to help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses. For those on a low income but not receiving Pension Credit, support may be available through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

Routine eye tests are an essential part of staying healthy. Alongside protecting your vision, they can also detect conditions such as high blood pressure, raised cholesterol, heart disease and even early signs of stroke.

Speak to your local optician to book your free NHS sight test. You can find your nearest optician by visiting www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-an-nhs-sight-test/location

For more information on what benefits you may be entitled to, contact our Helpline on: **0345 450 1276** or email helpline@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk.



Advertisement

Welcome to your new home at Fern Meadows

Are you over 55 and looking for a fresh start in a friendly, supportive community? Fern Meadows in Faringdon offers beautifully designed apartments for over 55s, combining independence with peace of mind.

We have shared ownership properties available from just £31,500 for a 10 percent share.

Get in touch to find out more:

 info.fernmeadows@housing21.org.uk  01367 888 010

Fern Meadows, Brickell Way, Faringdon, SN7 7ZH

Housing 
Extra Care Living

Puzzles

Anagram 1

Coach to hotel

Anagram 2

When it sow

Acrostic quiz

Can you crack this acrostic quiz and uncover the secret local destination hidden in the first letters of each answer?

1. Large primate known for swinging through trees in tropical forests _____
2. Frozen water _____
3. Large wild cat, often called the “king of the jungle.” _____
4. River near Woodstock that joins the Thames _____
5. Star at the centre of our solar system _____
6. Stadium famous as the home of English rugby _____
7. The capital city of Scotland _____
8. Famous London venue for opera and ballet performances _____
9. The Roman goddess of love and beauty _____
10. Dome-shaped structure made of snow, used by Arctic peoples _____
11. Safari park in Wiltshire, home to lions, giraffes, and meerkats _____
12. Major port city in northwest England, famous for The Beatles _____
13. Country known for kangaroos, koalas, and the Outback _____
14. Small fruit grown in vineyards, often used to make wine _____
15. Mild, round Dutch cheese often sold in red wax _____

Write your acrostic answer below and check your answers on page 18:



Shining a light on **domestic abuse**

Hourglass, a national charity, reports that 1 in 6 older people experience abuse—a figure they describe as reaching epidemic levels. With cases rising and our population ageing, creating a safer society for older people is more urgent than ever.

At Age UK Oxfordshire, we're committed to raising awareness—both for those experiencing abuse and for those who may witness it. Increasingly, older people are telling us they're facing domestic abuse and it's vital we shine a light on this issue.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse happens when someone close to you—like a partner or family member—uses harmful behaviour to control or hurt you. You might feel like you're walking on eggshells, worried about how they'll react. That's not OK, and it's not your fault.

Domestic abuse can take many forms. Some people call it 'domestic violence', but it doesn't always involve physical violence.

If someone is being hurt, controlled or frightened by a partner, ex-partner or family member, it could be domestic abuse. This includes things like:

- Controlling someone's money
- Constantly putting them down or making them feel worthless

It's not just something that happens between couples. It can happen between parents and adult children, siblings or other family members.

Here are a few important things to remember:

- Domestic abuse doesn't have to involve hitting or physical violence.
- It's not just something that happens in romantic relationships.
- It can affect people of any age—not just younger people.
- Even if it only happens once, it still counts as abuse.

How it might affect you

It's not always easy to recognise or accept abuse, whether it's happening to you or someone you care about. Domestic abuse can take many forms—emotional, physical, or financial—and can leave people feeling afraid, anxious, lonely or ashamed. It can also lead to neglect, worsening health or added money worries.

Abuse is often about control or intimidation, and even if someone doesn't mean to cause harm, their behaviour can still be abusive. Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported.

If you're worried about someone else, your support can make a real difference. You don't need to have all the answers—just listening without judgement and helping them find the right support can change lives.

Where to find support

Help is available. Whether you're experiencing abuse or are concerned about someone else, there are people ready to listen and provide support.

If you, or someone you know is in immediate danger, call the police on **999**. If it's not an emergency, you can call the police on **101**.

You can also contact Hourglass on **0808 808 8141** at any time of the day or night or visit www.wearehourglass.org. There is a red 'exit the website' button if you need to leave the site quickly.



Could you become a DA Friend?

Local charity, **Reducing the Risk**, has launched a community-focused initiative designed to help everyday people – friends, neighbours, colleagues – to support those affected by domestic abuse.

Recognising that domestic abuse is widespread and often hidden, the DA Friends programme equips people with the confidence and tools to engage in supportive conversations and take action.

The core principles of the programme are:

- **Listen:** DA Friends learn how to listen without judgment, understand the impact of domestic abuse, and respond appropriately.
- **Link:** They are trained to connect victim-survivors with local support services and DA Champions and are given resources like helpline cards.
- **Lend a Hand:** DA Friends help raise awareness by sharing posters, hosting charity events, and volunteering at local initiatives.

Anyone wishing to become a DA Friend will need to attend a one-hour (online or in-person) session which covers:

- What domestic abuse is
- How to respond safely and supportively
- How to protect themselves while helping others
- Ongoing support provided



Find out more at reducingtherisk.org.uk/da-friends or email friends@reducingtherisk.org.uk.

Useful contacts

Age UK

0800 055 6112

www.ageuk.org.uk

Better Housing Better Health

0800 107 0044

bhbh@nef.org.uk

www.bhbh.org.uk

Carers Oxfordshire

01235 424 715

carersinfo@carersoxfordshire.org.uk

Connection Support

01865 711 267

enquiries@connectionsupport.org.uk

www.connectionsupport.org.uk/oxfordshire

Cruse Bereavement Support

01865 245 398

oxfordshire@cruse.org.uk

www.cruse.org.uk

Home Library Service

01865 810 259

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Live Well Oxfordshire

01235 849 410

livewell@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

<https://livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

My Vision Oxfordshire

01865 725 595

info@myvision.org.uk

www.myvision.org.uk

National Debtline

0808 808 4000

<https://nationaldebtline.org/>

Out of hours Duty Social Worker

0800 833 408

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxfordshire Mind

01865 247 788

info@oxfordshiremind.org.uk

www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk

Oxfordshire Talking Therapies

01865 901 222

oxon-talking-therapies@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/oxon-talking-therapies

Samaritans

116 123

www.samaritans.org

Puzzle Answers

Anagrams

Anagram 1

Hot chocolate

Anagram 2

Snow White

Acrostic quiz

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. B aboon | 9. V enus |
| 2. I ce | 10. I gloo |
| 3. C heetah | 11. L ongleat |
| 4. E venlode | 12. L iverpool |
| 5. S un | 13. A ustralia |
| 6. T wickenham | 14. G rapes |
| 7. E dinburgh | 15. E dam |
| 8. R oyal Opera House | |

Acrostic answer:

BICESTER VILLAGE

Discover our groups across Oxfordshire

Bereavement Support

Open to people aged 60+ who have lost a loved one. Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Didcot, Grove, Kidlington, Oxford, Wheatley, Witney.

community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk
01235 849 434

Carers Support

We know the importance of peer support, and that there is real benefit in connecting with people who know what you're going through. We run and support a variety of groups through our sister organisation Carers Oxfordshire, in locations across Oxfordshire.

carersinfo@carersoxfordshire.org.uk
01235 424 715

Dementia Support

We run and support a number of groups across the county which provide information, support and connection to those living with dementia, and their carers.

Various locations across Oxfordshire through our dementia support service, Dementia Oxfordshire.

info@dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk
01865 410 210

Digital Support

Whether you need help with your phone, computer or tablet, we can support you to develop your skills and safely get involved with the online world.

Bampton, Banbury, Benson, Bicester, Burford, Didcot, Kidlington, Oxford, Sonning Common.

community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk
01235 849 434

Exercise Classes

Tailored exercise classes for older adults, including Strength and Balance, seated exercise, and Big, Bold and Balance for people living with Parkinson's. Plus Stay Strong and Steady, a falls prevention exercise and information programme. Available at venues across Oxfordshire and online via Zoom.

active@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk
01235 849 403

To find out more about the below activities, please contact us on:

community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk
01235 849 434

Aviation Group

A social group for all, whether you're an aviation expert or just have a general interest. Carterton.

Book Clubs

TeaBooks are sociable book groups for those 60+, helping people to share a love of books and reading, and to make new friends.

Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Headington, Kennington, Kidlington, Marston, Oxford, Wantage, Wallingford, Witney.

Chatterbox and Social Get-togethers

Social mornings and afternoons offering a warm welcome, with refreshments and a chat.

Chipping Norton, Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, Oxford, Sonning Common, Wallingford, Witney.

Information & Advice Drop-ins

Abingdon, Banbury, Barton, Bicester, Carterton, Cholsey, Didcot, Faringdon, Horspath, Oxford, Sonning Common, Steventon, Thame, Wantage, Wallingford, Witney.

Lunch Clubs

A chance to meet and eat in friendly company. Banbury, Bicester, Chipping Norton, Eynsham, Kidlington, Thame.

LGBTQ+ Groups

Social groups for older people in our LGBTQ+ community. Banbury, Didcot, Oxford.



A future there to be had

Stephen was living in a mobile home in Radley without heating, hot water or a working toilet. With support from Age UK Oxfordshire, he is now getting the help he needs to make his home safe, warm and comfortable again.

Without basic comforts, Stephen spent much of his time alone, relying on blankets and hats. Routine tasks felt daunting, and the practical problems took a heavy emotional toll. “The toilet in particular wasn’t flushing, so I had to rely on a bucket,” he remembers. “That was really challenging and quite embarrassing.”

For two years, daily life had been a struggle. “It’s very isolating,” Stephen recalls. “You just stay in the one room where it’s warm.”

After a hospital stay, Stephen was referred to Age UK Oxfordshire. Diane, his Link Worker, remembers the situation: “Stephen was living in a cold home and dealing with financial barriers. He needed practical support and someone to help him navigate his situation.”

Together, they identified the key issues and began to take action. Diane has helped Stephen to apply for a grant from Better Housing Better Health to repair his boiler and gas pipes, to restore his heating and hot water. With support from St Swithun’s Church, a plumber replaced the broken toilet. Diane also helped him access financial advice and benefits support, while his GP’s Social Prescriber offered ongoing guidance.

“Now, it just feels that there is a future there to be had.”

Stephen



With Age UK Oxfordshire's help, Stephen has taken the first steps towards feeling safe and comfortable at home again. Things aren't perfect—but he's no longer facing everything on his own.

“Having Diane and Age UK Oxfordshire there at the end of the phone, just to be able to chat sometimes and know that, although everything hasn't been sorted today, that it will be over time.”, he says.

Beyond the practical help, Stephen was keen to reconnect with his community. He now volunteers at St Swithun's Church café, finding purpose and enjoyment in helping others.

Diane reflects: “It's really wonderful to see change happening and to be a part of that.”

Stephen also enjoys music and audiobooks, which give him joy and comfort in his daily life.

He's now exploring further volunteering opportunities and local activities, building connections and rediscovering independence.

Through the type of support we've provided to Stephen, we continue to strive for a fairer later life, making sure older people are seen, heard, included, and supported to live life their way.

“Now it just feels that there is a future there to be had,” Stephen says.



Watch Stephen's story by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://youtu.be/6MPE10yb-jQ>.



**Community Links
Oxfordshire**

A service provided by



Our Community Links Oxfordshire Team are here to work with you to discover what could make a difference to your life and support you in living well. Funded by Oxfordshire County Council, we offer free, personalised support. We work at your pace, listening and supporting you in the way that suits you best.

Call us on **01235 849 434** or email community@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk to discover what could make a difference in your life.



Living well at home

For many of us, having a comfortable home is essential, especially as we grow older. It enhances our quality of life and allows us to stay in a familiar place close to family and friends. However, thinking about a time when we or a loved one might need extra support can be difficult.

You may worry about placing additional responsibilities on your family, friends or neighbours. Similarly, if a family member needs more support, you might feel unsure about how best to help them.

Knowing where to start can feel overwhelming. From figuring out what kind of support you or a loved one need to understanding how to pay for social care, there's a lot to consider. That's why Oxfordshire County Council's living well guides are an essential read. They can help you find the support you or a loved one need, whether it's assessing care needs, finding out about aids and equipment, exploring housing options, arranging care at home or paying for your care. Think of these guides as your go-to resource.

Most of us start thinking about our living arrangements when we need additional support. However, it is never too early to start thinking about how you can remain living at home. Start the conversation and talk through your future wishes with your family. By planning ahead, you have time to think about what support you may need.

It's worth remembering that social care isn't free, and most people will need to pay part or all of their care costs. So, it's important to find out if you're eligible for financial support. Don't forget to check if there are any benefits or allowances you're entitled to. Not all of them are means tested, so the *planning ahead* and *paying for care* guides are well worth a read.

Read Oxfordshire County Council's living well at home guides at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/livingwell. Unable to get online? Pick up a copy from your local library.

Live Well Oxfordshire

Live Well Oxfordshire is your one stop shop for over 2,800 services and activities. Whether you're looking for fun activities, essential care or transport, they've got you covered. Plus, there's lots of useful info and advice on a range of topics, all aimed at giving you more choice and control over the support and services you need. Find out more at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/livewell.

Sign up to EngAGE Magazine for FREE!



If you would like to receive information about activities, services and opportunities in your area, or would like to join our EngAGE mailing list, fill out this request form and return it to: **Age UK Oxfordshire, 10 Napier Court, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3YT** or call **0345 450 1276**. If you received this copy through the post you'll already be on our mailing list. Or you can email **contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk** or visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire** (About us - Sign up to our email updates) to sign up to our email updates including this magazine.

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Donate

Age UK Oxfordshire relies on donations to ensure we are there for the older people in Oxfordshire who need us most. To make a donation please complete and return this form to:

Age UK Oxfordshire, 10 Napier Court, Barton Lane, Abingdon, OX14 3YT. Alternatively call us on **0345 450 1276** or donate online via **www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/get-involved/donate**

Every donation makes a difference. Thank you.

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If you would like to hear about our events, campaigns and how you can support local older people, please tick your contact preferences below. You can opt out at any time.

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Our Services

We provide a wide variety of services for older people including:

Information and advice

Dementia support

Carer support

Physical activity classes

Telephone befriending

Digital support

Homeshare

Bereavement support groups

Foot care

Scams prevention advice

Hospital discharge support

Social activities and clubs

LGBTQ+ groups

Call us on
0345 450 1276

or visit
**[www.ageuk.org.uk/
oxfordshire](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire)**
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information



All our staff have access to telephone interpreting services for over 200 languages. This magazine is available in screen-reader friendly digital format and large print. Contact us at media@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk for more information.



Leave a legacy for a fairer later life

By leaving a gift in your will to us, you would be supporting us to create a fairer later life for older people in Oxfordshire. You can make sure we are always there for those who need us most. (Charity number 1091529). To find out more please call **0345 450 1276** or email contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk. Alternatively visit our website www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire and search 'Leave a legacy'.