HAPPY BIRTHDAY HELP AT HOME!

10 Year Celebration for Help @ Home

The Help at Home scheme has been in operation for 10 years in February this year. During this time a total of 3370 older people have been helped at home. There have been over 287,000 home visits which have resulted in over 578,000 hours of help from Home Support Workers and Volunteers. Unbelievably, we have also raised £8,100,000 in extra benefits for older people who were not claiming.

The scheme is supported by Shropshire Council and accredited to the ISO 9001:2008 quality standard. We currently support over 1,000 older people throughout the county of Shropshire. Anyone over the age of 60 may be eligible for this service. There are three separate elements to this scheme all aimed at supporting people to help them live independently in their own home:-

**Domestic and Shopping Service** provided by employed Home Support Workers. These HSWs are fully trained; CRB checked and have a particular empathy with the needs of older people. They carry out everyday tasks that the older person is having difficulty doing. There is a charge for this service which is currently £18 for two hours work.

**Befriending Service** addresses the loneliness that older people often experience. Volunteers provide this free service. A Befriending Visitor makes a friendly social visit at home for a chat, cup of tea and to share experiences.

**Telephone Buddy** is a free service provided by trained volunteers which takes the form of a telephone call (usually on a Monday) to have a general chat and to check on well being.

All our volunteers, who are also CRB checked, undergo training and are issued with a comprehensive set of guidelines, with emphasis on supporting the independence of the older person. We always need volunteers too! If you are interested, please get in touch with Keith Gallop on (01743) 233123 Ext. 226.
10,000 ADVOCACY CASES AND GOING STRONG!!

We, in the Advocacy Service are proud to announce that we have just passed a major landmark – we have taken on our 10,000th case. This does not mean that we are going to sit on our ‘laurels’! We are aware that there are still a lot of issues that older people need help with.

- Many older people and their families approach us when a loved one needs to go into a Care Home. We know the upset and distress this can cause, and the issues that arise relating to finding a place in the right care home and in dealing with the funding of that place. We will always be there to give information and support, and when necessary to challenge decisions which do not seem to fit in with regulations.

- Blue Badges are quite an issue in Shropshire (not so in Telford). We have a volunteer who deals only with Blue Badge applications. Over the last few years she has helped over 600 older people apply for a badge. The council adhere stringently to the criteria and this is something we are discussing with senior council staff at present. Due to our endeavours there is now an appeals procedure in place; if someone believes that their application for a badge has been refused unjustly they can ask for a re-appraisal. We are also trying to get the application form simplified.

- There are monthly Legal Surgeries; one in Mardol Gardens Shrewsbury and one in Meeting Point House Telford. Local solicitors give 15 minutes free legal advice. The service is restricted to one appointment per person.

We will look at any problem brought to us and if we cannot help we can usually signpost older people to an appropriate organisation which can.

Our aim is to continue to help older people and challenge issues where appropriate. We need more volunteers to help us do this. If you think you might be interested, please contact Keith Gallop on (01743) 233123 Ext. 226.

Here’s to the future – here’s to older people and Age UK giving as much support as possible.

*Pictured Gaynor, Chris and Geraldine, our Advocacy Team*

AND TALKING STATISTICS...

Last January we started to record the number of enquiries that come through our Reception at the Shrewsbury office in Mardol Gardens. This service is run by a team of eleven volunteers and one part-time member of staff. Some of the volunteers come in for one day a week, others a morning or afternoon.

We always knew that we were busy but our figures show that last year we handled 11,353 enquiries!! Amazing! Nearly 3,000 people visited our office whilst over 8,000 made their enquiry by telephone (including a few by email too!). Approximately 1,400 were signposted to external organisations and over 10,000 used our internal, local services.

*If you have a query, please visit us or call (01743) 233123 – we’re happy to help! Office open Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm/Telephones 9am – 4pm*
Care in Crisis

What is social care?
Any service ranging from help in the home for dressing, washing, getting in and out of bed and going to the toilet, to 24-hour support in a residential care home. These services are designed to maintain a good quality of life, help people to remain independent, stay active and protect them in vulnerable situations.

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin is supporting Age UK’s new report: Care in Crisis 2012, highlighting the social care crisis in England which shows that there is currently a £500m national funding gap for older people’s social care. This funding gap comes after several years of stagnating and then decreasing social care spending. Since 2004 the number of people aged over 85, and most likely to need care and support, has increased by over 250,000. The increasing demand, combined with a decrease in real terms spending on social care, has created a real funding crisis.

Heather Osborne, Chief Executive of Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin said: “This report spells out in black and white the depth of the national funding crisis in social care that results in so much misery for older people and those who care for them”. The campaign is calling on the Government to reform the care system now to ensure that everyone gets the care they need to live a good quality life, with dignity and assurance. The new petition calls on the Government to take urgent action to ensure that:
- Everyone who needs care receives it and is treated with the respect they deserve
- No-one is forced to sell their home or sacrifice all their savings to pay for the care they need
- People are able to plan and prepare for care in advance

If you have signed the Age UK Care in Crisis petition, thank you for your support.
If you would like to follow this campaign please visit www.ageuk.org.uk/careincrisis or call into your local Age UK office for a progress report.

Loneliness - the "hidden killer" of elderly people

A campaign group, set up by Independent Age, Age UK Oxfordshire, Counsel and Care, and WRVS, has called for greater recognition of the link between isolation and ill-health. A lack of social interaction can make old people more vulnerable to depression and to problems such as excessive drinking, poor diet and a reduction in exercise. It is also linked to the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

- More than half of people over the age of 75 are living alone
- One in 10 says he or she suffers from "intense" loneliness
- Almost one in five old people sees family, friends or neighbours less than once a week
- One in 10 of them experience social interaction less than once a month

There is a need for informal and formal attempts to tackle such loneliness, either through organised befriending schemes or through neighbours helping one another. The befriending schemes run by Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin are designed to do just that. Volunteers go into people’s homes for up to two hours a week providing friendship and that little bit of support for lonely and less mobile older people.

We could help a lot more people if we could find extra volunteers. Do you know anyone who could spare a couple of hours a week? Contact Keith on 01743 233123 Ext. 226 or email keith.gallop@ageukstw.org.uk
A is for apple, and B is for boat, that used to be right, but now it won't float! Age before beauty is what we once said, but let's be a bit more realistic instead.

The New Alphabet!

A's for arthritis; B's the bad back, C's the chest pains, perhaps car-di-ac?
D is for dental decay and decline, E is for eyesight, can't read that top line!
F is for fissures and fluid retention, G is for gas which I'd rather not mention.

H for high blood pressure--I'd rather it low; I for incisions with scars you can show.
J is for joints, out of socket, won't mend, K is for knees that crack when they bend.
L's for libido, what happened to sex? M is for memory, I forget what comes next.
N is neuralgia, in nerves way down low; O is for osteo, bones that don't grow!

P for prescriptions, I have quite a few, just give me a pill and I'll be good as new!
Q is for queasy, is it fatal or flu? R is for reflux, one meal turns to two.
S is for sleepless nights, counting my fears, T is for Tinnitus; bells in my ears!
U is for urinary; troubles with flow; V for vertigo, that's 'dizzy,' you know.

W for worry, now what's going 'round? X is for X-ray, and what might be found.

Y for another year I'm left here behind, Z is for zest I still have--in my mind!

I've survived all the symptoms, my body's deployed, and I'm keeping twenty-six doctors fully employed!

This "quacked" me up!!
NEWS FROM OUR BENEFITS DEPARTMENT

Sadly we have had to say farewell to our Information & Advice Manager, Wendy Richards. Wendy left us at the end of January to start an exciting new career in Telford. She will be much missed. Wendy joined Age UK (then Age Concern) 16 years ago, and single-handedly started up a Benefits Department. Under her management, she built up a thriving and successful unit which has helped hundreds of older people in Shropshire and Telford. We estimate that her department has raised over 10 million pounds in benefits over the last 16 years. This was only possible with Wendy’s drive and enthusiasm. We all wish her well for the future.

There are numerous changes afoot in the Benefits system that are having, or will have, an impact on older people. One that many people are phoning us about is the reduction in their Pension Credit. Many people receive only a small amount of Pension Credit known as ‘Savings Credit’. This acts as a sort of reward for just missing out on the main ‘guaranteed’ Pension Credit. Savings Credit is only ever a relatively small amount and is complex to work out. As part of the Government cutbacks, it is slowly being phased out, so people who only get Savings Credit are seeing a yearly reduction in the amount they receive of between £3 and £4. There will NOT be a reduction in their overall income as the increase in State Pension will be greater than the reduction of Savings Credit. Please phone our Benefits Department if you have any queries about this 📞 (01743) 233123.

Council to Take Control of State Benefits

Proposals in the Welfare Bill currently going through Parliament will give sweeping new powers to the Council. At the moment, Council Tax Benefit is a help for people on a low income with their Council Tax. It is run by the Council but the rules are set by Central Government. However, new proposals set to be implemented by April 2013 will give much more responsibility to the Council. The Council will have greatly increased powers as to who will be eligible. As the intention is to save money, it is likely that these new rules will be less generous. To date, the Council have made no decisions as to implementation, as the Bill has yet to clear parliament. But the Government have insisted that the new rules should not disadvantage older people.

This is not the case with another benefit that the Government intend to delegate to Local Authority – Community Care Grants. These are very useful grants for people on a low income for vital items in the home, such as cookers, carpets etc. However, the Government intend to scrap these grants in April 2013. The Local Authority will be required to run a replacement scheme – but it does not have to be run in the same way or to the same criteria. Anyone who needs help from a Community Care Grant is advised to claim while they still exist.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

‘To work with and for older people to improve the quality of later life’

😊 Thank you to all our volunteers who help us achieve this 😊
Stafford University Faculty of Health provides educational programmes across health care and social care provision including Undergraduate and Postgraduate Awards.

The Faculty would like to invite service users and carers who have experiences of health care or Social Services to get involved in the Service User and Carer Group. *(S.U.C.E.E.D Project)*.

Members of the SUC group support the education and research departments and they also have an opportunity to bring their expertise and experience so that the student learning experience is enriched. Research provisions help to ensure health and social care professionals have meaningful insight into service user and care needs. In essence the Service User and Carer group helps to provide a personal perspective to the education provisions of the Faculty.

Some service users and carers have expertise in various chronic illnesses and living with the impacts of these conditions and resulting disabilities. These innovative methods for learning with the service user or carer really add to the students learning experience. A group member has defined their experience: “*When I spoke to a group of students, both nursing and social workers, it gave me such a feeling of really making a difference which made me feel worth something and was priceless.*” Comment by Service User for Staffordshire University 2011.

These partnership approaches in education really seem to benefit both the students, service users and carers alike. For more information please contact Helen Burrell at Staffordshire University 01785 353719 or e-mail h.s.burrell@staffs.ac.uk

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**SHROPSHIRE OLDER PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY**

At the end of last year a new organisation called the Shropshire Older People’s Assembly formed to give a voice to older people and groups who work with and for older people in the Shropshire Council area (not Telford).

The group has already had two successful public meetings and has planned some further meetings for the year to focus on key issues affecting older people. Dates for your diary are:

*Tuesday 3 July - Health*
*Tuesday 2 October - Transport*

Anyone with an interest in older people’s issues is welcome.

Further information/venue details will come out closer to the events or contact Heather Osborne, Chief Executive Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin on (01743) 233123.
WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP RUN THE NEW BRIDGNORTH DIAMOND DROP IN CENTRE

- Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin opened its first Diamond Drop-In Centre for people with dementia and their carers in Telford in October 2011. The new service was launched by Cllr Malcolm Smith, the Mayor and Mrs Ann Ward, the Chair of The Wrekin Housing Trust - see above photo which also shows our President, John Greenhalgh.

- The centre has now been running for 3 months; members’ feedback is that the Drop-In is providing an invaluable service.

- We are now planning to open our next Drop-In Centre in Bridgnorth. Local people have been consulted and have supported the need for such a group.

- The centre will provide a fortnightly get-together with a chance to get to know others and share experiences in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. It will also provide members with support and information and an opportunity to take part in interesting activities coordinated through the team of trained volunteers.

- We would like to hear from anyone who would like to be involved in volunteering to help set up and run this exciting new service. The main role will be to make people feel welcome and to help run the sessions. Full training and support will be given by Age UK.

- If you think that you have the time (a few hours once a fortnight) and interest to make a difference and put a little sparkle back into the lives of local people with dementia and their carers then please contact Neil Brookes – Tel. 01743 233123 ext 252 Email neil.brookes@ageukstw.org.uk
What does Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin do?

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin is a local charity working to help older people within the county of Shropshire. A mix of staff and volunteers undertake a wide range of services which are either free or charged at a very minimal cost. Whatever the support needed, whatever the problem, Age UK will do its best to help.

- **Advice & Information**: A free service that helps the public with all manner of queries and problems. Information booklets and factsheets are available.
- **Advocacy**: Independent and trustworthy support for older people facing problems, such as care home charges or disputes with a service provider. Volunteers also visit local long-stay psychiatric wards unannounced to check on conditions and act as a caring friend for patients who do not receive regular visitors.
- **Befriending**: Age UK volunteer befrienders reduce the loneliness and isolation felt by many older people. Befriending schemes vary in different areas of the county.
- **Benefits Advice**: Benefits officers answer enquiries, provide benefits checks and assist in the completion of claim forms and representation at tribunals.
- **Day Centres**: Over forty day centres linked to Age UK around the county provide a friendly day out and a hot meal once a week for frail older people. All our day centres are run by volunteers.
- **Diamond Drop-ins**: Provide help and support for older people with dementia and those who care for them.
- **Help at Home**: The scheme, funded by Shropshire Council and operating in that area alone, gives older people practical support in their home by means of support workers. There is a small charge. Within this service is a befriending scheme to provide social support.
- **Home from Hospital**: This South Shropshire scheme gives short-term support to people over sixty on their return from a stay in hospital or a visit that has resulted in treatment.
- **Insurance**: Funeral plans, personal alarms, gas and electricity, travel, home and contents, motor insurance and motor breakdown services are available plus charity flowers and a weekly lottery.
- **Intergenerational Projects**: Bringing older and younger generations together to create art, drama, reminiscence work and to recruit older volunteers to work in schools as mentors.
- **Involving Older People**: We set up and continue to support Telford & Wrekin Senior Citizens’ Forum which now has over a thousand members.
- **Legal Surgeries**: Solicitors offer free fifteen minute advice sessions on a monthly basis at the Age UK office in Shrewsbury and Telford.
- **Living Well**: Classes in dancing, Tai Chi and art, as well as reading and creative writing groups. Gentile exercise classes are available to day centre members and the general public over sixty. Regular events include a literary competition, art exhibitions and an Afternoon of Entertainment.
- **Llandudno Holiday**: Older people normally unable to take a holiday due to illness, disability or isolation, are able to enjoy a week away.
- **Neighbourhood Contact Scheme**: The Neighbourhood Contact Scheme is there to give assistance to older people who have become isolated from society, whether as individuals or as groups, to become once again involved with their community.
- **North East Shropshire Interdisciplinary Team**: The team provides a multi-disciplinary approach to community rehabilitation after illness or a crisis. Age UK’s role is to help with daily living tasks and support.
- **Parish Links**: Volunteers act as information links between Age UK and local communities within the Shropshire Council area.
- **Pub Lunch Clubs**: Members enjoy a reasonably priced meal and a chance to get out and meet people. Over fifty clubs exist in all areas of the county.
- **Tax Help**: Independent free tax surgeries, run by professionals, are available at the Age UK offices in Shrewsbury and Telford. These are intended for people over sixty on low income who have tax concerns.

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**HOW TO GET HOLD OF US IN SHROPSHIRE**

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin

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<th>Tel: (01743) 233123</th>
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<tr>
<td>North Shropshire Office Tel: (01948) 665317</td>
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<td>Age UK NESIT Co-ordinator Tel: (01630) 650850</td>
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Advocacy Service (Direct Line) Tel: (01743) 357748

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<th>Tel: (01743) 357749 or (01952) 200010</th>
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<td>Telford Office Tel: (01952) 201803</td>
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<td>Information Line Tel: (01952) 216018</td>
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Help at Home (Direct Line) Tel: (01743) 233788

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<th>Home from Hospital, Ludlow Tel: (01584) 879046</th>
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