

Prevention Matters – Don't Cut It!

As we get older we want to stay independent, but sometimes we need a bit of help. Whether it's going to a day centre, having a befriending visitor, or getting help at home, the extra support can make all the difference. At the moment, the council gives the voluntary sector money to run preventive services using funds that have been given to them by central Government. That pot of money has shrunk and now Shropshire Council may have to slash a huge £2.1 million from its preventive budget for adults.



If you value the services you use, please tell us why they're so important to you and what would happen to you if they were taken away. Please complete this short survey and return it to us.

What Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin services do you use (*please circle all that apply*):

- Help at Home Service
- Befriending
- Benefits Advice
- Day Centre
- Living well activity e.g. lunch club, walking group, walking football, fitness class, craft group, reading group

How much do you value this service? 4 (very much) 3 (quite a lot) 2 (a little) 1 (not at all)
(*please circle*)

Why did you say this?

If the service wasn't there, what effect would this have on you and your quality of life?

Your post code

Your name (optional)

Your contact number (optional)

Can we contact you about your answers? Yes No

Your details will not be used for marketing purposes.

Please tear off this page and return it to: Age UK STW, 3 Mardol Gardens, Shrewsbury SY1 1PR

This survey is also available on-line via our website www.ageukshropshireandtelford.org.uk

Supporters taking on Challenges!

Brave volunteers are taking on a trio of challenge events this Spring in order to raise vital funds for Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin.



Dawn in action!

Zip Wire – gravity and age-defying challenge

Nona Silcock, 71, and Dawn Baly, 75, hurtled through the air for almost 200 metres attached to a steel wire high above an ancient quarry, reaching speeds of up to 40 mph. Proving that age is no barrier to fun or trying new activities, the pair took part in the sponsored challenge at The Edge Adventure in Much Wenlock at the start of April and raised more than £2,000!



The Age UK team with James and Joe from The Edge



Nona and Dawn, post-zip!

Snowdon Challenge – biking, trekking and kayaking 35km.

Holly Vivian, 47, from Llanfyllin, Powys is preparing for a tough multi-activity challenge on 14 May 2016 when she will take part in a 17km bike ride, 15km trek up and down Snowdon and a 4km kayak all within 12 hours.

Bridgnorth Walk – 22 miles

A team of around 14 people are taking part in the 50th annual 22-mile Bridgnorth Walk. The group includes Ruth Brown, our head of fundraising, who says: “The walk takes in some beautiful scenery and includes climbing the Brown Clee. It is going to be quite gruelling but the discomfort will be worth it for such a great cause!”

If you would like to take part in a challenge, or sponsor someone for their efforts, please call 01743 233123 to find out more.

WELL DONE JO!!

The organiser of Donnington Day Centre, Jo Horton, and Age UK STW's OPEL Support Officer, Lois Clifford, successfully applied to the Lottery 'Awards for All' and were granted over £3,000! The award was given to the day centre for nominated projects including a Christmas Shopping Trip (photo), Christmas Dinner with entertainment and a Summer Trip to the Seaside to name but a few! Age UK STW would like to recognise the hard work Jo put in to secure this award and wish the members lots of fun and enjoyment.



Shrewsbury Walking Football Club Birthday Celebrations



Last month members of the Shrewsbury Walking FC went to The Abbey pub after their usual Thursday morning game to celebrate their oldest player's 80th birthday. George Sherry has been a member of the Shrewsbury Walking Football Club for 2 years and in the past played amateur football for Church Stretton. George says he rarely misses a game; it gives him something to look forward to and he enjoys the company. During the celebration George accepted a cheque for £250 on behalf of Shrewsbury Walking Football Club which was presented by The Abbey Pub Manager, Stuart Coates - see photo. This generous donation will be used to replace

football equipment. The Shrewsbury Walking FC meets Thursday mornings at Monkmoor Recreation Centre, Racecourse Crescent SY2 5BP. Please contact Susan Stefiuk at Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin for more information on (01743) 233123 or email susan.stefiuk@ageukstw.org.uk.

Wear It Woolly

Hundreds of people from all over Shropshire wore something woolly in February – not just because it was winter, but also to support older people in the county who struggle to stay warm.

Schools, care homes, places of worship and businesses all took part in our annual 'Wear It Woolly' event which raised several hundred pounds. Everyone who took part made a donation to dress in something woolly such as a funny jumper, a Sherpa hat, stripy knitted tights or a colourful scarf.

Every winter, many older people in our community struggle to keep warm. High fuel costs and poor home insulation have a devastating impact on their health. **In Shropshire, around 252 older people die prematurely from the cold every winter – a shocking statistic.** At Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin, we help local older people beat the cold through our annual **Winter Warmth** campaign. We give advice about how they can stay warm and we offer **Surviving Winter Grants** to help repair heating or replace boilers. We also combat loneliness through the warmth of friendship with our Befriending service, Day Centres and Living Well activities. **A massive thank you to all those organisations who took part; it really does make a difference to older people in our community.**



A fresh approach to Wellbeing and Friendship

What is the secret to a happy and fulfilling old age? Good health? Good friendships? Financial security? Lots of interests? Most people would answer that it's a combination of all these things and the truth is probably just that: there's no one thing that will make you happy in old age (or indeed any age).



What we do know, however, is the effect that long-lasting isolation and loneliness can have on a person's health. It is estimated that loneliness can be more detrimental to one's health status than the effects of smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Which is why all of the services we provide at Age UK STW are aimed, in one way or another, at trying to reconnect older people to their communities: to help them form meaningful friendships and ultimately enjoy the old age they've earned.

So how will we do this in practice? Firstly, our experienced Assessors will talk to the older person and establish exactly what their needs are. They will then draw up a plan: this might include a Benefits check, a befriending visitor or a referral to a Day Centre or class that interests them (be it dancing, exercise, reading, even walking football!). If we can't find a local class or group for a particular interest, we'll try and set one up.

And we know that sometimes the hardest thing for an older person to do is to try something for the first time (and doesn't this apply to any age? Few people relish walking into an established group for the first time...). Whether you've lived by yourself for a long period or have recently been bereaved, it can be terribly hard to do something alone for the first time. So we'll have a team of special volunteers who can accompany the person for as many sessions as they need to gain confidence.

Friendships, interests, good health and security – we can't guarantee all of these but we'll do our best to help older people fulfil as many as they can.



THANK YOU VERY MUCH

We would like to thank the many generous individuals who continue to support our vital work by making donations. Recently, we have been supported by these two local organisations - Saint Gobain who donated £600 to our Diamond Drop-In Centres and Aico who donated £2,000 to support our services in Oswestry.

SHREWSBURY SUPPORTERS GROUP



A new fund-raising group has been formed in Shrewsbury to organise events and raise much-needed funds for the charity. The Shrewsbury Supporters Group came together last May and has been meeting monthly ever since – in its ‘head office’ at the Hole in the Wall pub in Shrewsbury!

The ethos of the group is to arrange events that we’d all like to attend, whether they’re ‘for charity’ or not. And in so doing they’ll raise money for the charity! So far the group has arranged a wine-tasting evening at Tanners, a dinner-dance at The Lord Hill and an inter-generational event at Shrewsbury School which brought together 50 older people and 50 schoolchildren to enjoy music, food and reminiscing. Coming up there’s a sponsored Zip-Wire, plans for a summer fete and another dinner dance and many other ideas. Chaired by Kate Taylor, who was previously a volunteer befriender for Age UK STW, the group started out with a small handful of people but now has around 16 active members who come to the meetings. The group joins the North Shropshire Supporters as the second fund-raising group in the County and we’re hoping that a third, in Telford, will be established soon. If you’d like to know more about the group please visit their Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/AgeUKShrewsburySupporters/> or contact Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin on (01743) 233123.



Calling all Telford Supporters...

Are you sociable? Do you like organising events? Would you like the chance to meet new friends and have fun? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then you would be perfect to help us set up our new volunteer supporter group in Telford.

Our supporter groups play a vital role by helping to organise fundraising events and activities in their local areas. We already have two successful groups in North Shropshire and Shrewsbury and we are now hoping that some of our friends in Telford will help to establish a group there. The group will meet up socially about once a month and plan events such as dances, discos, concerts, pub quizzes, curry evenings, wine-tastings, cake stalls, racing nights and much more.

If you are interested in supporting Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin by joining this group, please contact Ruth Brown on 01743 233123 or email ruth.brown@ageukstw.org.uk for more details.

Save Attendance Allowance

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin help older people to claim Attendance Allowance, and in 2014/15 supported 377 local people to claim this benefit, and we continue to support more people every year. We know that in almost all cases the allowance has made a huge difference to the life of the older person claiming it. This is why we are supporting Age UK's consultation on the proposed changes.

The Government is preparing to consult on transferring the administration of Attendance Allowance to local Councils; the consultation is likely to be launched later in the spring. **So what is Attendance Allowance, and why does the proposed change matter?** Attendance Allowance is there to help older people if their ability to keep safe or to look after their own personal care is affected by physical or mental disability. There are two weekly rates, currently £55.10 and £82.30, depending whether the person affected needs help in the day, at night, or both. At present, Attendance Allowance is paid to 1.5 million people aged 65 or over in the UK, regardless of their personal means. Claiming Attendance Allowance does not depend on or reduce any other income the individual receives, and claiming it can be the gateway to claiming other benefits. Importantly there are no restrictions on how an older person spends the money, once they have claimed it. This means that it is a really important benefit in helping older people to stay independently at home for as long as possible.

Although we don't know the full details of the proposed changes yet, Age UK has concerns that they could result in a postcode lottery around the country, and it is unclear as to whether the money would be ring-fenced in local Councils. Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director of Age UK, said: "Attendance Allowance fulfils a real need. We would be very worried if it were to go to fewer people as a result of any transfer." Age UK believes that this relatively modest payment is an important preventative measure that can make a huge difference in helping disabled older people get the help and support they need to remain independent, saving money in the longer term, and improving their quality of life.

Age UK want to demonstrate the vital role that Attendance Allowance plays in the lives of older people. Please help us by filling in the consultation form. If you give us a ring at our office in Shrewsbury or Telford we will send you a copy of the consultation form, which can be returned directly to Age UK.

If you think that you may be entitled to claim Attendance Allowance, please ring Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin on (01743) 233123 for an initial discussion.

A great afternoon of entertainment!

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin is holding its annual Afternoon of Entertainment variety show at The Place, Oakengates, Telford, on Tuesday 17th May 2016 from 2pm to 5 pm. Tickets cost £5.

The theme this year is the Sizzling 70s and to entertain us we welcome a Professional Bass Baritone Singer, Bollywood Dancer Hunkia, Comedians 'Dandy' Glynnis & Allan Briscoe and Redhill Primary School who will be leading us in a 70s sing along. There will be refreshments and a raffle with great prizes!

Heather Osborne, Chief Executive of Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin, said "This is an event that we organise every year and it is a great afternoon out. Please come along and be a part of it". If you would like information about booking tickets for the show please contact Bella Sohi on (01952) 201803 ext 002 or email bella.sohi@ageukstw.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW...?

- We support 40 OPEL Centres across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. OPEL stands for Older People Enjoying Life and are what are also known as Day Centres.
- Over 600 older people attend one of these centres every week. And for many people, this is the only social contact they may have from one week to the next.
- The centres are all run by teams of fantastic volunteers, including organisers, drivers, treasurers and general helpers. Without these remarkable people the centres simply wouldn't operate.
- The average age of members is now over 85! In a recent survey, 95% of the members stated that the quality of their lives had been improved by attending an OPEL centre.



If you would like to volunteer at a Day Centre – or if you feel you would benefit from attending one - get in touch and we'll see what we have available near you.

Make a difference all the time!

With the threat of more local authority cuts looming, there is no doubt that we need our supporters more than ever to help us to deliver services to vulnerable and isolated older people in the county. In the last few years the reduction of council funding and services has had a significant impact on us, with not only the numbers of clients increasing, but often the level of need of those coming to us being much higher.

We are working hard to find different ways to maintain our services and to seek alternative funding.

One of the ways in which you can help us is to consider making a regular donation to our charity. It does not have to be a large amount but it could make a huge difference to many older people who need our help:

- £3 a month could pay for a lonely older person to receive a weekly phone call from one of our Telephone Buddies.
- £5 a month could pay for a 'Sparkle Day', be it music, art or just pampering at one of our 40 lively Day Centres.
- £10 a month pays for the recruitment and training of a new volunteer. This is essential in providing the best possible service to vulnerable older people.

If you would like to make a regular donation, call Ruth Brown on (01743) 233123 or email ruth.brown@ageukstw.org to set up a standing order.

GO-TO

GO-TO Drop-ins - either use one of our computers, with the latest software, or bring your own laptop or iPad, tablet etc. for only **£1.00** per hour. Hot drinks and snacks available at low prices.

Help is on hand with:

- Your new tablet or laptop
- Setting up an e-mail address, sending and receiving emails and attachments
- Computer basics
- Internet access
- Sending photos to family and friends
- Online searching and shopping
- Hobbies and interests
- If you have to make a social housing application on-line

We are a UK Online Centre for Learn My Way, FREE courses to help improve your IT skills.



**GO-TO at The Roy Fletcher Centre, 12-17 Cross Hill,
Shrewsbury SY1 1JE**

Here to help with your computer, email and
internet needs

**Drop-in Monday & Thursday 10.00am-3.00pm with
Volunteers on hand to help.**

HOW TO GET HOLD OF US IN SHROPSHIRE

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin
3 Mardol Gardens, Shrewsbury SY1 1PR

Reception Tel: (01743) 233123

Help at Home (Direct Line) Tel: (01743) 233788

Advocacy Service (Direct Line) Tel: (01743) 357748

Riverside Shopping Centre, Shrewsbury

Reception Tel: (01743) 588500

Insurance Service (Direct Line) Tel: (01743) 290586

Volunteer Recruitment Tel: (01743) 588570

Charity Furniture Shop Tel: (01743) 588870

Age UK NESIT Co-ordinator Tel: (01630) 650850

Home from Hospital, Ludlow Tel: (01584) 878046

Telford Office Tel: (01952) 201803

Information Line Tel: (01952) 216018

Insurance Tel: (01952) 200010

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.ageukshropshireandtelford.org.uk

OR EMAIL US

enquiries@ageukstw.org.uk