



# *Improving later life*

Age UK Solihull 2022-23 Annual Review





## Welcome to Age UK Solihull's Annual Review 2022-23

Our **vision** is of a world where older people flourish, and our **mission** is to help improve the lives of all older people in the borough of Solihull.

Together with our trustees, staff, volunteers, partners and supporters we help make later life better for thousands of older people in Solihull.

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# Directors and Trustees

S R Tomlinson (Chair)

L E Bourne

P Chauhan

D C Mattocks

C Murray (appointed 30 November 2022)

P J Oakley

R M Paulin (appointed 25 May 2022)

N C Robinson

A J Rolf (appointed 27 July 2022)

## **SMBC Rep**

Cllr Andrew Burrow

## **Company Secretary**

A F Hastings

## **Registered Office**

The Core, Central Library Building, Homer Road, Solihull, B91 3RG

## **Registered Charity Number**

1055887

## **Senior Statutory Auditor**

Mr J Seagrave FCCA

## **Statutory Auditors**

Seagrave French LLP

SFHQ, 1 Poplars Court, Lenton Lane, Nottingham, NG7 2RR

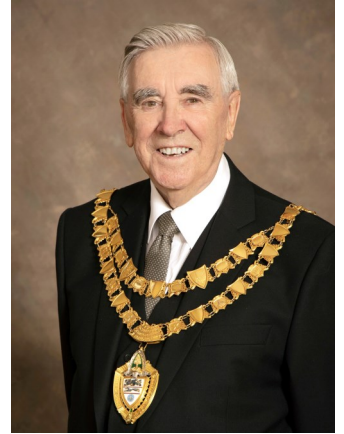
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# President's Message

Age UK Solihull continues to provide an impressive range of services to meet the needs of the growing older population of Solihull. And as Mayor I was pleased to join the team in March 2023 to celebrate the Ruby Anniversary to mark 40 years of Age Concern/Age UK in the borough.

We all know that the Covid pandemic and the dramatic rise in energy costs and general inflation has impacted particularly on older people. Bereavement and isolation during lockdown, plus worries about affordability of heating/lighting and rising food costs has also contributed to increased stress and loneliness, particularly for those living alone. The work of Age UK Solihull and its great team of volunteers provides valuable support, advice and practical help to so many who find life challenging.

Thank you for another year of great service and every best wish for 2023/24.



**Councillor Ken Meeson**

**Mayor of Solihull 2022-23**

# Chair's Statement

The post Covid-19 pandemic challenges continued during 2022-23. Whilst the vaccinations have done their job in protecting many, encouraging socialisation and confidence in going out still proves a challenge for many of our clients. In addition, the cost-of-living crisis resulted in the older and more vulnerable clients being particularly badly hit. Choosing between food and heat is a reality for many with soaring prices for both food and energy.



Locally we helped Solihull to distribute the Household Support Fund to 3,946 households in the borough most in need.

Demand for our services continues to rise, with more people than ever on the waiting lists for befriending and the clubs. In particular we saw an over two-fold increase in demand for our Older People's Information and Advice Service reaching over 2,000 people. During this year, Age UK nationally recognised the success we had with the Digital Champions Project and have taken over funding for the project for a further year.

As Chair, I am constantly humbled by the dedication of our more than 380 volunteers and many supporters, both individual and corporate, as well as our amazing Trustees and staff. Without them we would never reach the number of clients, numbering a truly amazing 10,000 in 2022-23, whose lives we touch in a meaningful way. There are so many inspiring stories of our work in this review, whether through our Community Advice Hubs in partnership with Solihull MBC, our specialist Information and Advice Service, Postural Stability Classes, Home Support Service, Winter Warmth Campaign and more.

This year saw us partake in an important study with Birmingham University around self-funders for care which will influence policy in the UK in the future. This will be particularly relevant to the silent self-funders in the borough whose lives we maybe don't currently touch as much but who are still part of the wider community of older people in the borough.

2023 will bring our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, a great milestone we can all be proud of.

I would like to thank all the staff at Age UK Solihull for the professionalism they show and their dedication to their roles. In particular, thanks to the senior team who yet again have gone above and beyond for the concerns of older people in the borough. All our staff have the concerns of older people at the forefront of everything they do.

**Sally Tomlinson - Age UK Solihull Chair** 5

# Chief Executive Officer's Message

The last two years have taught us that as an organisation we are resilient and adaptable and can rise to a challenge. We have adapted new ways of working and connecting with people and we have witnessed the joy that most people have shown in being out and about and spending time with others. That is not to say that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has not cast a long shadow for many, whose mental and physical health and wellbeing has been negatively impacted, and who will need more support to feel strong, confident and independent again. The difficult and challenging times have however emphasised what we have always known, that our staff and volunteer teams are amazing and give so much in effort and dedication to the residents of Solihull.



The cost of living crisis has had a big impact on thousands of older people in Solihull; even those who thought that they were reasonably financially secure found the massive hikes in fuel costs very worrying, with some sadly deciding that risking turning off the heating was preferable to not being able to pay the costs of keeping it on. Following on from the pandemic it was a year where, more than ever, it was vital that Age UK Solihull remained a strong and effective charity to meet the ever-growing needs. Our services continued to evidence high levels of impact and public benefit for everyone in Solihull as we strive to meet our goal of making Solihull a great place to grow old.

Forty years on and still working hard to make Solihull a great place to grow old! Looking back over the years, it is interesting to remember that Age Concern had its origins during the Second World War, which made life more difficult for older people in many ways, but also revealed their existing problems. It would be fair to say that the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have done pretty much the same thing – exposed the vulnerabilities of older people to loneliness and social isolation together with the heightened health risks posed by being cold or not having enough nutritious food to stay healthy and well.

We recognise that Solihull shares many characteristics with England as a whole, but it also has a range of unique challenges. A larger proportion of the Solihull population is aged 65 and over compared to England and this group is projected to be the fastest growing population cohort over the next 20 years, in particular those aged 85 and over (+3,500 by 2041). This has implications for many services, particularly rising demand for health and social care, and will undoubtedly have implications for the range of services that we offer or might wish to offer in the future. Going forward, we need to ensure that we reach out even further to older people, their carers' and their families, to support them with the impartial, personalised, and expert information and advice they need. We are in the privileged position of being able to speak to older people day in day out, so we're constantly learning more about the challenges older people face, and constantly looking to provide appropriate services or solutions to those challenges.

As we celebrate our Ruby anniversary from March 2023, we will remain grateful for all the help and support we get and look forward to the next 40 years with hope and enthusiasm that we will be here when we are needed.

**Anne F Hastings**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

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# Employees as at 31st March 2023

Management



Charity Shops and eBay



Digital Champions



Community Advice Hub -  
including Benefits and Debt



Social Prescribing



Linking Veterans Together/  
Community Advice Hub



Older Peoples I&A and  
Housing Support



Winter Warmth



Direct Payments



Home Support Service & Home From  
Hospital Service



Postural Stability Instruction  
and Linking People Together



Finance



Admin



Fundraising



Volunteering



# *Enabling People*

to get involved in shaping their world  
so that it better meets their needs



2022-23 was a **record year** for our Benefits Service, as advisers helped residents of all ages successfully claim over **£3,000,000** in benefits.



# Highlights

2022-23 saw the fourth year of our contract to provide **Community Advice Hubs** in Solihull in partnership with Solihull Mind, demonstrating the Local Authority's continued commitment to transforming the borough's prevention and early intervention services, responding to local and national priorities, as part of its Community Wellbeing Service.



The number of clients accessing the **Community Advice Hubs** during 2022-23 were well back to the pre-pandemic levels seen in 2019-20.



The **Welcome Desk** function which was closed completely during lock-down in 2020-21 and only partially opened the following year, saw **2,337** people, and generated **3,843** contacts, a huge increase on the 282 people and 497 contacts dealt with in 2021-22.

The **South Solihull Community Advice Hub** dealt with **4,461** people and generated **16,364** contacts. The **North Solihull Community Advice Hub** supported **2,557** people and generated **9,626** contacts, again an indicator that the numbers are even higher than pre-pandemic when 2,225 people were seen and 8,861 contacts were generated.

Our **All-Age Benefits Services** (a partnership of Age UK Solihull and Solihull Mind) successfully claimed **£3,149,360**, more than half a million pounds more than last year and a new record for the service. To achieve this during the very challenging year of the cost-of-living crisis was particularly gratifying for our hard working staff and volunteers. Of this, **£541,000** in Attendance Allowance was claimed for older people through our Volunteer-led Attendance Allowance Claim service.



The **Direct Payments Information and Advice Service** was accessed by **66** new clients and helped **324** people to manage their personal care budgets and find the right kind of support to meet their care needs.



The **Solihull Winter Warmth Campaign** has been delivered by Age UK Solihull on behalf of Solihull Council since 2008. This year the project recorded **1,311** clients (2021-22 was 912) and **4,372** contacts.



The cost of living crisis has undoubtedly had a major impact on residents of Solihull, particularly older people, those living with disabilities and families with young children. In the year 2022-23 **Age UK Solihull and the Community Advice Hubs** distributed grants of **£514,770** to **3,946** households. This was mainly from the Household Support Fund but also Baron Davenport grants and grants from Charitable Trusts.



# *Promoting positive attitudes to ageing*

**by recognising the valuable contribution that older people make to society**



We work in **partnership** with statutory and voluntary sector colleagues in Solihull to achieve the very best outcomes for our client group.

# Highlights

## Safeguarding Adults



At Age UK Solihull, we take very seriously the need to work in a way that prevents harm and protects those we support. We accept that no agency can do this alone, and that it is only by working in partnership and making safeguarding everyone's business can we hope to keep people safe.

We are committed to ensuring that all relevant staff and volunteers understand their responsibility, have the relevant training and DBS checks in place. We sit on the Solihull Adult Safeguarding Board and chair the Engagement and Prevention Sub Committee and ensure that the Voluntary and Community Sector in Solihull are well represented as key players in the prevention of abuse of older and vulnerable people in the Borough.

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## Partnership Working

Age UK Solihull continues to work in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector colleagues in Solihull to achieve the very best outcomes for our client group. This has again been very evident in the last year when amazing things were achieved by people pulling together to support those in need through the cost-of-living crisis and the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.



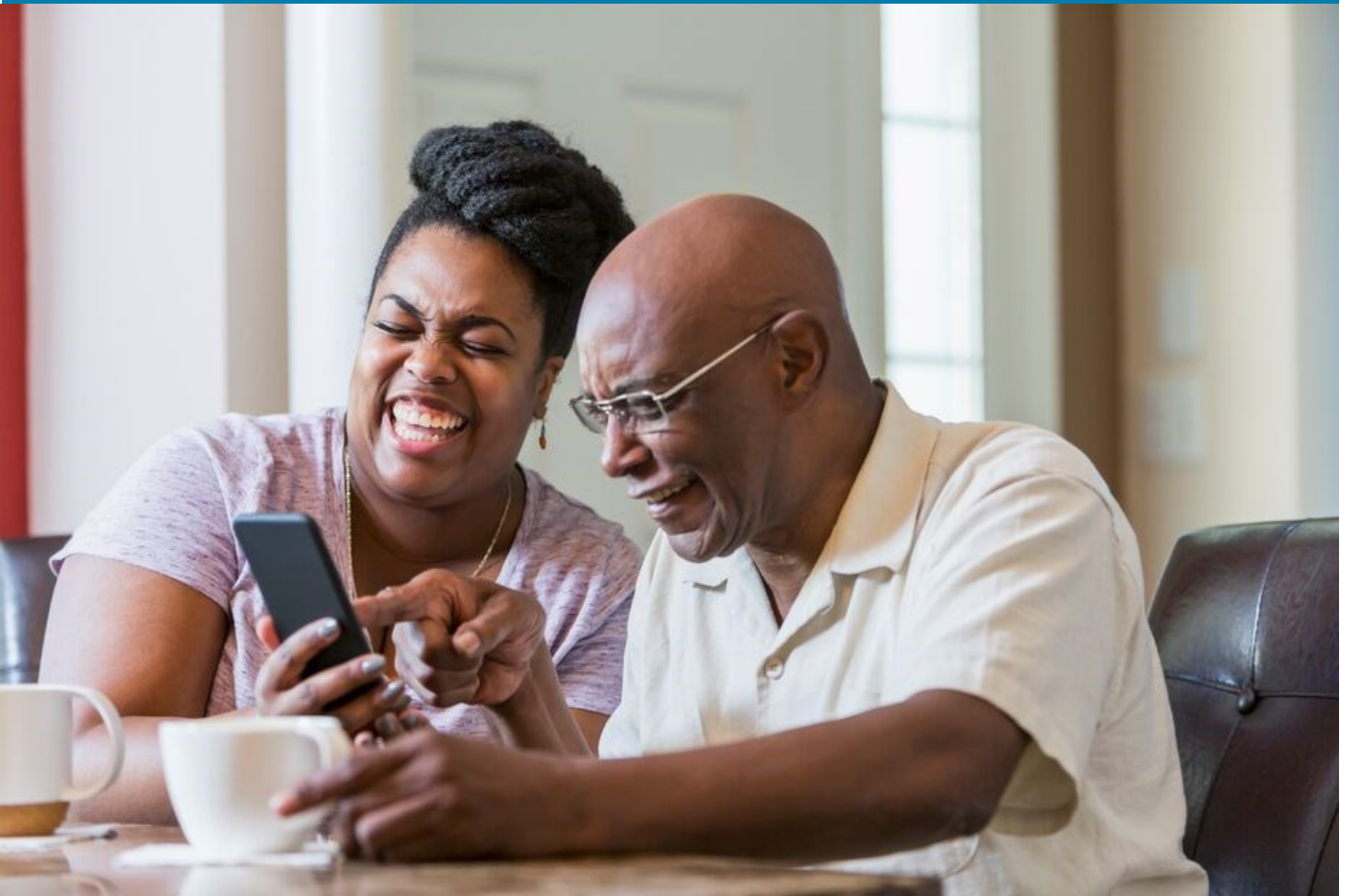
We also work closely with our colleagues at Age UK and the Age England Association on our common aims for older people and are active members of the Age UK West Midlands Regional Board and Networks. During the last year, we have also forged a closer working relationship with the Age UKs in the East Midlands, which has proved to be a good way of sharing best practice.

During the last year, we have again had the opportunity to use our expertise with older people to take part in a second piece of research with the University of Birmingham entitled 'When the money runs out – Capital Depletion and transition out of self-funded care'. While we all know that many care services are expensive and will over time use up a large proportion of a person's savings, little is known about people's experience of asking for support, or what happens when there is a change from self-funding to council support. This research will focus on that gap in knowledge with results due out next year.



# *Supporting older people*

**through a wide range of services delivered  
in the way that older people want**



The number of people accessing our **Older People's Information and Advice Service** has increased by **2.5 times** in two years.

# Highlights

Our **Older People's Information and Advice Service** has seen an increase in the number of older people accessing the service, up from 1,641 in 2021-22 to **2,014** in 2022-23, and 2.5 times more than the pre-pandemic year of 2019-20. This is a specialist service which requires staff to have a high level of knowledge and experience in a wide range of areas including housing, care and independent living and a whole host of other issues which impact on the lives of older people in Solihull every day.



In 2022-23 a new service commenced, **Housing Related Support**, providing support to residents of Sheltered Housing Schemes in Solihull. From June 2022 to March 2023, **116** people were supported by the service.



The **Linking People Together Service** including clubs and befriending had two exceptionally busy years in 2020-21 and 2021-22 due to the additional services provided due to the pandemic. In 2022-23 referrals settled to a more manageable level of **268**, indicating that for some people at least, life was returning to some kind of normal. There remains a large waiting list for our very popular lunch clubs, helped no doubt by the fact that they are mostly held in pubs! At any given time, there are approximately **550** clients involved in the project. Volunteer numbers will probably never be as high as they were during the lock-down periods when many people were furloughed and so had time to help the community, nevertheless there were **144** volunteers supporting the service in the last year, which is heartening.

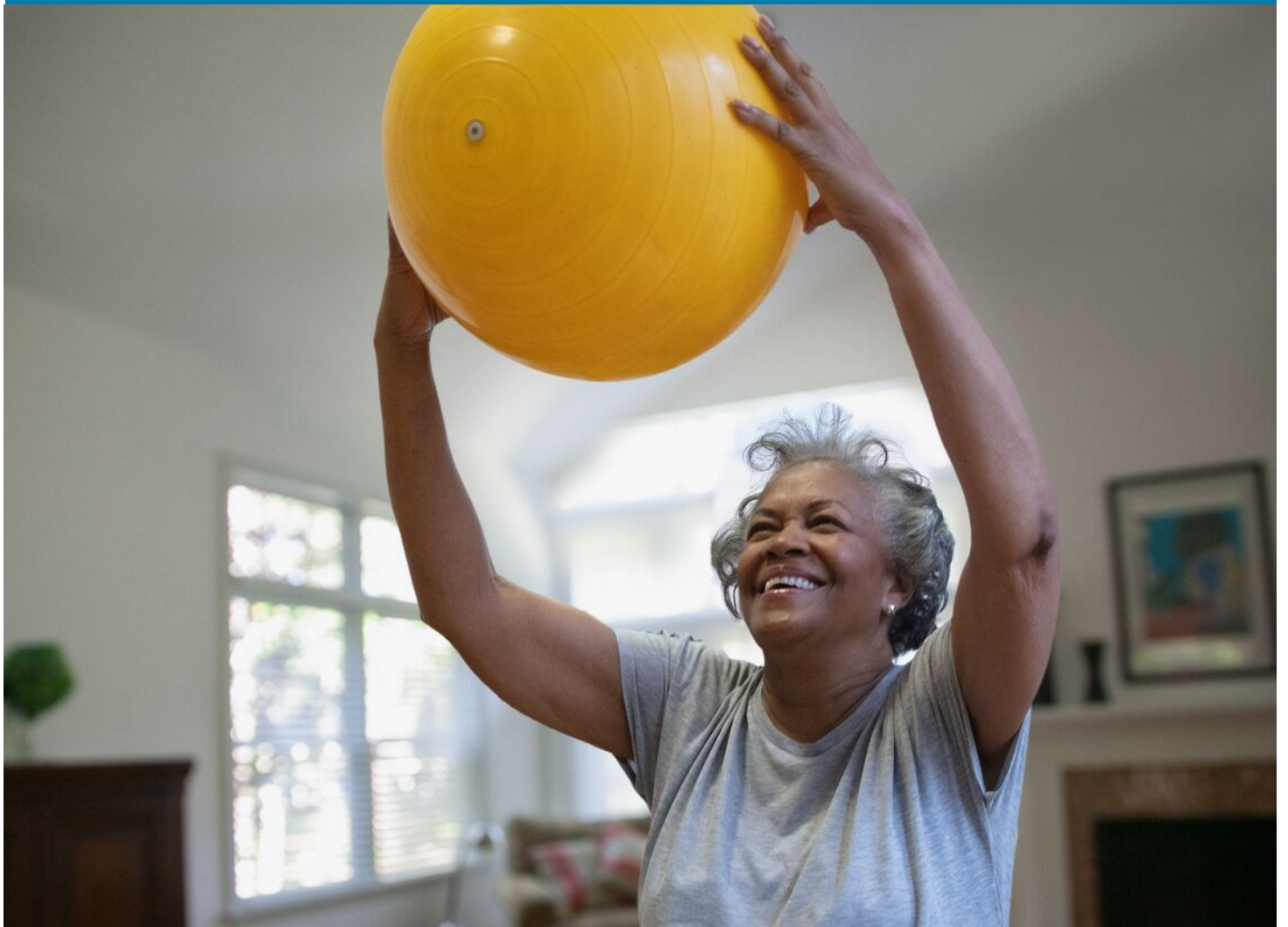


The **Linking Veterans Together Project**, funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund, completed its 2 year funding period over target with **355** older Veterans involved in at least one of the strands of the project. The service provided additional support for Veterans to connect with their peers and their wider communities and 5 day trips to places chosen by the Veterans and 2 parties were held. The lasting legacy of the project is the ongoing coffee mornings and the publication of the book *'Memories of Wartime and Active Service – Solihull Veterans recollections of war and active service across the years'*. We thank all Veterans for their service to their country.



# *Working With and For Older People*

**in very practical ways to promote their health, wellbeing and independence.**



**91%** of those who completed our Postural Stability Instruction programme did not go on to have another fall.



# Highlights

Age UK Solihull's only chargeable service, the **Home Support Service** was hit very hard by the pandemic as clients feared the transmission of COVID-19 into their homes. Two years later, we are still struggling to get back to pre-pandemic levels, but it is on an upward trend. The main challenges have been the difficulty in recruiting to the Home Support Worker roles. We recognise that this is true for a lot of Domiciliary Care and NHS vacancies across the country, not just in Solihull and there is a lot of competition for people wanting to work in the sector. The proliferation of new Care facilities in Solihull over the last few years has exacerbated the situation but we are hopeful that people find working for a Charity fulfilling especially given the flexibility we offer. We are averaging approximately **720 hours** of Home Support per month.



The **Home from Hospital Service** enables timely discharges from hospital together with post-discharge support. It works closely with the Hospital Social Work Teams and provides a range of practical help and support to help a person settle back into home following a stay in hospital and the often unexpected disruption that can cause, particularly those who do not have family or friends nearby. In 2022-23, **158** people were supported by the service to be safely discharged home.



Our partnership with the South Central Solihull Primary Care Network delivered social prescribing services to **158** patients of **4** GP Practices in 2022-23. The **Social Prescribing Service** aims to support patients with non-medical issues and connect them to services to meet their wider wellbeing and social needs.



Our **Postural Stability Instruction** classes funded by Birmingham and Solihull ICB are the only evidence-based strength and balance exercise for those suffering frequent falls. The service has again exceeded its target number with **206** people starting the 20 week programme in 2022-23. The outcomes for those using the service are outstanding, with **91%** of those successfully completing the programme not having had another fall in the post programme monitoring period and **98%** continuing to undertake exercise following their completion of the course.



Following on from the partnership with Public Health to deliver a **Digital Champions Project**, we were successful in bidding for an 18 month programme funded by the national Age UK. The service is vital to ensuring older people can connect to digital platforms including email, banking, shopping, social media etc. From June 2022 to March 2023, **124** people received Digital Support tutorials either one to one in their own homes or in group classes. **37** older people took advantage of the tablet loan scheme. **588** older people were involved in awareness raising sessions across the borough.



**Volunteers** have been at the beating heart of our work with older and vulnerable people this last year, supporting our clients with information, benefits, befriending, clubs and supporting our services with administration. We are proud to note that this year **381** volunteers, a ratio of nearly 7 volunteers for every staff member, supported our charity. We are truly an excellent example of care, compassion and community activity.



# *How we raise our funds*



Age UK Solihull's unrestricted income in 2022-23 was **£387,049** which was derived from our **charity shops** and **social enterprise** and **donations**, allowing us to deliver on our core objectives of **improving later life**.

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# Highlights

Sales during 2022-23 at our shops at



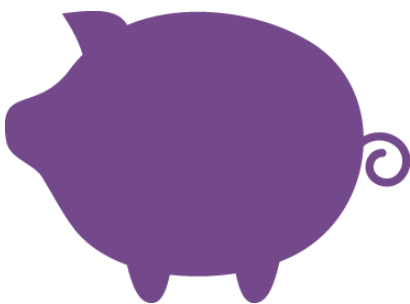
- Hobs Moat Road, Solihull
- Hurst Lane North, Castle Bromwich

totalled **£136,238**

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Income from our Home Support Services amounted to

**£159,851**



Our Fundraising Team raised **£96,749**, of which **£57,642** was unrestricted.

We were pleased with the success of our Slip Into Slippers, the Big Knit and our Christmas fundraising activities. We received fantastic support from a number of local organisations and businesses, including Shirley Lions, Knowle & Dorridge Lions, Care UK, Solihull Round Table, Solihull 41 Club, Blossomfield Rose Care Home, CPW and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire.



# Financial Review

In 2022-23 our total incoming resources were **£1,906,000** and our total expenditure was **£1,813,000**.

**91p** in every £1 was spent on our charitable activities.

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## Income by source

Voluntary income **£70,000** 

Retail **£136,000** 

Charged for services **£174,000** 

Income from charitable activities **£1,509,000** 

Fundraising activities **£8,000** 

Other **£9,000** 

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## Charitable Expenditure - total £1,649,000

Enabling older people **£914,000** (55%) 

Promoting positive attitudes **£9,000** (1%) 

Supporting older people **£305,000** (18%) 

Working with and for older people **£421,000** (26%) 

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## Other Expenditure

Cost of generating funds **£164,000** 



**Age Concern Solihull trading as Age UK Solihull, started life as Age Concern Metropolitan Borough of Solihull in March 1983 in response to considerable research and strong evidence of the need for an organisation to provide services and to work in partnership with the local authority for the benefit of older people.**

**Age Concern Solihull is a charity - registration number 1055887. It is a company limited by guarantee - the company number is 3180062. The registered office is The Core, Central Library Building, Homer Road, Solihull, B91 3RG.**

**Age UK Solihull is a member of the Age England Association (which replaced the Age Concern Federation following the merger of Age Concern England and Help the Aged in April 2009). In September 2010, Age UK Solihull became a brand partner of the new national charity Age UK, with a shared commitment to working with older people, shared values and aims. In 2016, we agreed a new Brand Partnership which is due to be renewed in 2024.**

**Today, Age UK Solihull is a medium sized organisation, employing 57 staff (full and part time) and has one of the largest volunteer help-forces (350+) in the borough.**



Charity Number: 1055887