



Let's change how we age

.....
Age UK Solihull Annual Review 2024-25



Welcome to Age UK Solihull's **Annual Review 2024-25**

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.

Directors and Trustees

S R Tomlinson (Chair)

P Chauhan

D C Mattocks

P J Oakley (resigned 31 July 2024)

C Murray (resigned 29 May 2024)

R M Paulin

N C Robinson

A J Rolf

P Rose-Smith

R Watson (appointed 29 May 2024)

M Boyle (appointed 31 July 2024, resigned 07 December 2024)

T Bavin (appointed 25 September 2024)

SMBC Rep

Cllr Andrew Burrow (to May 2024)

Cllr Dave Pinwell (from May 2024)

Company Secretary

A F Hastings

Registered Office

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

Registered Charity Number

1055887

Statutory Auditors

Thomas & Young

Carleton House, 266-268 Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 3AD

President's message

This year, I have had the immense privilege of witnessing the very best of human nature — kindness freely given, friendships quietly formed, and trust built one gentle moment at a time. That is the essence of Age UK Solihull.

At the tea afternoon, surrounded by laughter, stories, and shared memories, I saw what this charity truly stands for. It's not just about services or support — it's about connection. It's about people who care deeply about one another, who show up not because they have to, but because they *want* to. Because they believe, as I do, that no one should face later life alone.

The volunteers are the heart of this organisation. They give not only their time, but their compassion — without expectation, without hesitation. Their presence says, *"You matter. I'm here."* That kind of giving is rare, and it is powerful.

And to the older people I've met — thank you. Thank you for the trust you've placed in this charity. For welcoming Age UK Solihull into your lives, for sharing your stories, and for showing us that ageing is not about fading — it's about continuing to love, to give, and to be part of something.

Age UK Solihull is a living example of what happens when community comes first. It's a place where kindness still matters. Where friendship still grows. And where every act of giving, no matter how small, helps light the way for someone else.

It has been an honour to stand beside you this year. I will carry your stories with me always.

With heartfelt thanks,

Cllr Shahin Ashraf, MBE

President, Age UK Solihull 2024–2025



Chair's statement

Despite some relief in energy bills, choosing between food and heat is still a reality for many older residents, with soaring prices continuing to cause distress to many. Locally, we have continued to help Solihull Council to distribute £87,000 from the Household Support Fund to households in the borough most in need as part of our Community Advice Hubs contract which has now completed its sixth year.



Demand for our services continues to rise, with more people than ever on the waiting lists for befriending and the lunch clubs. We saw strong demand for our Older People's Information and Advice Service, reaching over 1,682 people and generating 7,393 contacts. During this year, Age UK continue to highlight the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on older people, including running an OMAZE house raffle during the festive season, and we were successful in receiving a £20,000 grant as a result of this to enable us to support the increased demand for services such as Linking People Together service and our lunch clubs. In addition, we continue to offer our Digital Champions Service, enabling our 15 volunteers for that service to provide 324 hours of tuition to residents in group and individual sessions.

As Chair, I am grateful to our many supporters, both individual and corporate, as well as our amazing Trustees and staff. Attending fundraising and volunteering events this year, brought to my attention many stories of our supporters going above and beyond for Age UK Solihull, from jumping out of airplanes, to running quiz nights and fundraisers, or just giving some of their time. Each year there are 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, Digital Champions Project, Lunch Clubs, Social Prescribing, Winter Warmth Campaign and more.

Fundraising and grant income is proving harder to achieve, fortunately offset somewhat by an increase in legacies this year. Changes to our brand partnership agreement mean that, unless Age UK Solihull are specifically mentioned, the legacy will go to the national charity in future rather than be shared. This presents its own challenges, and we will be keeping our supporters and local will writers and lawyers apprised of this going forward.

Our nomination in 2024 for a Kings Award for Voluntary Service for our volunteers was unfortunately unsuccessful, but I would like to thank all those who supported the nomination and recognise that to even be nominated is a huge recognition of the selfless dedication of our 300 volunteers in the borough, who together provided over 15,100 hours to Age UK Solihull and our clients.

I would also like to thank the Trustees, Volunteers and Staff at Age UK Solihull for their dedication and hard work. Thanks must go from all the Trustees to the senior team who continue to go above and beyond for the concerns of older people in the borough. All our staff and volunteers continue to put the welfare of older people at the forefront of everything we do. Thank you.

Sally Tomlinson - Age UK Solihull Chair

Chief Executive Officer's message

This year, as we reflect on 42 years of amazing and unstinting service to older and vulnerable people in Solihull, amid increasing demand and seemingly never-ending increases in costs, we take this opportunity to thank our brilliant staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly, with passion and commitment throughout the year to support and help our clients.



This work, as evidenced by the statistics gathered in this report, shows their commitment to supporting those who are lonely and isolated, experiencing poverty and hardship, or striving to remain independent in their own homes. Everything that we do, be it information and advice, befriending, lunch clubs, Postural Stability classes, benefits checks, winter warmth helpline support, or safeguarding (amongst other things) are designed to help keep people safe and comfortable in their own homes.

One high point of the year was the major success achieved when we were awarded a three-year Charity Quality Standard Certificate following an external audit assessment in April 2024. The assessment was unable to identify a single non-compliance which is a testament to the hard work of Trustees, the staff team and our wonderful volunteers. Another high point was undoubtedly being nominated for the Kings Award for Voluntary Service, and even though we didn't win, it brought home to us what a wonderful charity we are, due in no small part to the amazing volunteer support we enjoy.

It has also been a year of deep reflection on our relationship with Age UK and all the local Age UKs in the country but especially with our neighbours here in the East and West Midlands. December 2024 saw us signing an important Age UK Network Agreement which is the result of long debate and discussion about what the future partnership should look like. Despite these important close ties, we remain however an independent, autonomous local charity, governed and steered by local people, and dedicated to serving older and vulnerable people in Solihull.

We thank our wonderful staff and volunteers, not forgetting our brilliant Trustees (who are themselves also volunteers) for working with us to help make Solihull a great place to grow old.

Anne F Hastings
Chief Executive Officer

Employees as at 31 March 2025

Management



Charity Shop and eBay



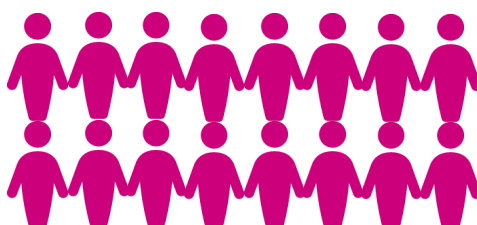
Business Support



Winter Warmth



Community Advice Hubs



Direct Payments



Older Peoples I&A and Housing Support



Social Prescribing and Care Coordination



Postural Stability Instruction



Home Support Service



Linking People Together



Finance



Administration



Fundraising



Volunteering



Enabling people

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



In 2024-25 we helped
Solihull residents
successfully claim over
£3.5m in benefits.



Highlights

In the sixth year of our contract to provide **Community Advice Hubs** in Solihull, demonstrating the Local Authority's continued commitment to the prevention and early intervention services, as part of its Community Wellbeing Service, the number of clients accessing the **Community Advice Hubs** during 2024-25 saw an increase in numbers, along with associated activity. In North Solihull there was a 5% increase and, in the South, a 2% increase. However the number of issues presented in the South increased by 14%, demonstrating the increased complexity of life for many people.



The **Welcome Desks**, based at The Core, Solihull, and Chelmsley Wood Library saw an increase of **25%**, with **2,819** people, compared to last year's 2,250 people. This generated **6,007** contacts compared with 4,253 in the previous year. The Welcome Desk also plays an extensive role in gathering customer service feedback and views on the help provided by the Hub staff.

The **South Solihull Hub** dealt with **3,952** people (last year 3,850) and generated **16,295** contacts (last year 14,260).



The **North Solihull Hub** supported **2,447** people (last year 2,331) and generated **10,064** contacts (last year 9,647).

Our sub-contract with **DRC** to deliver **Disability Casework** saw a steady increase in activity from 566 clients last year to **698** in 2024-25, an increase of 15% on an already excellent performance.

Our sub-contract with **Solihull Mind** (now called **OASIS Mental Health Support**) for **Mental Health Casework** saw **221** people access outreach support, a decrease of 87 people seen in 2023-24. Their benefits work showed a slight increase from 307 people to **355** during the year 2024-25. The numbers remained fairly stable for people accessing debt help and advice, with **235** this year compared to 239 last year.

Benefits advice still made up the majority of queries this year, with the **All-Age Benefits Services** successfully helping **985** Solihull residents to claim **£3,573,275**. Of this, **£719,678** in Attendance Allowance was claimed for **127** older people through our Volunteer-led Attendance Allowance Claim service. This is of great value to people to be able to pay for their care needs and it helps them stay independent in their own home for longer.



The **Direct Payments Information and Advice Service** was accessed by **85** new clients (2023-24: 73) and helped **321** people (2023-24: 378) to manage their personal care budgets and find the right kind of support to meet their care needs.



The **Solihull Winter Warmth Campaign**, delivered by Age UK Solihull on behalf of SMBC since 2008, aims to keep people warm, safe and well during the winter months with practical help and advice. This year the project recorded **734** clients and **3,777** contacts, a 20% reduction on last year, which may be linked to a milder winter.



The cost-of-living crisis had a major impact on the residents of Solihull, particularly older people, those living with disabilities and families with young children. In the year 2024-25 **Age UK Solihull** and the **Community Advice Hubs** distributed grants of **£87,000** to individuals and households in energy debt, for white goods and winter warmth items. Within this amount we also distributed 45 energy prepayments (of £200 or £300) to help older people on low incomes with energy bills, who are no longer eligible for winter fuel allowance. A further **£22,136** was distributed from **Baron Davenport's grants** and grants from various **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



Age UK Solihull are proud to be proactive and committed members of the **Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board** and are regular attendees at Board meetings and planning sessions as well as being active members of the Engagement and Prevention Sub Committee. We see safeguarding as a fundamental part of our work in the community and this commitment is reflected in the **Age UK Quality Standards** and the values of our organisation. We help older people to live free from abuse and neglect, and we promote the message that safeguarding is everyone's business, every day.

Adult safeguarding is at heart a simple concept – every adult should be able to live safely and the informed choices of adults to remain in situations that others may perceive as presenting risks must be respected. It is important therefore that everyone who works and volunteers with Age UK Solihull is enabled to understand and carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding adults who need care and support and are at risk of or experiencing abuse.

Being a member of the Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board enables us to work with others who are equally passionate, professional and committed to safeguarding, thereby strengthening our ability to recognise and respond to safeguarding incidents in the community.

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 been especially important throughout the Covid pandemic and continues to be so to support people with cost-of-living pressures. There is a recognition that local groups are essential to ensuring there are help points for different communities and needs. In 2024-25 **5,759** referrals were made to external partners (not including Oasis Mental Health Support).

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 various Age UK West Midlands Networks as well as working closer with the Age UKs in the East Midlands, finding there is much to learn from each other in dealing with the challenges we are presented with. The last couple of years have seen much closer working with Age UK colleagues from up and down the country as we navigated the final iteration of the **Age UK Network agreement**, which we committed to in December 2024.

We were thrilled when Age UK became the **OMAZE** Christmas Charity of the year, raising an unprecedented **£5.25 million** to support Age UK and the wider Age UK Network to tackle loneliness and isolation among older people. This is a record-breaking amount, the highest that an OMAZE draw has ever raised! Age UK generously shared the funding with all the Age UKs in the country and Age UK Solihull will receive **£20,000** over the next year to provide our Linking People Together Service.

Supporting older people

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



337 older people benefited
from a befriending call or visit, or
attended one of our clubs



Highlights

Age UK Solihull is committed to giving older people advice that is accessible, confidential, clear, and most important of all, independent. Our **Older People's Information and Advice Service** dealt with **1,682** people, with **7,393** contacts generated in 2024-25.



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.

The **Housing Related Support Service**, providing specialist support to residents of Sheltered Housing Schemes in Solihull, provided support to **195** residents over the last year, with **658** contacts generated.



Age UK Solihull's **Linking People Together Service** supports older people to maintain social interaction and remain vital members of their local communities.



During the year, **190** people attended our clubs while **147** people benefited from having a befriender either as a home visit or having a regular telephone call.

145 volunteers are involved in all aspects of the service, whether as home visitors, telephone befrienders, or helping out at the clubs.

Working With and For Older People

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



300 volunteers supported our services, contributing the equivalent of **£219,777**.



Highlights

Age UK Solihull's only chargeable service, the **Home Support Service** was hit very hard by the pandemic years as clients feared the transmission of Covid-19 into their homes. We are still working towards achieving pre-pandemic levels but like many similar services, our main challenge is the difficulty in recruiting to the Home Support Worker role, amid huge competition for a scarce resource. During the last financial year, **4,733** visits were undertaken to **91** clients, totaling **7,112** hours.



Our partnership with the South Central Solihull Primary Care Network delivered social prescribing services to **235** patients of **4** GP Practices in 2024-25. The **Social Prescribing service** aims to support patients with non-medical issues and connect them to services and activities to meet their wider wellbeing and social needs. In addition, a **Care Coordinator** supported **120** new patients in 2024-25 generating **1,315** contacts. Our **Social Prescribers** also organise monthly get togethers at The Tea Chest and the café at Asda in Shirley, in conjunction with **Solihull Council's Community Development Team** – open to anyone over the age of 18 who want to get out and enjoy some company.



Our **Postural Stability Instruction** classes funded by **Birmingham and Solihull ICB** (Integrated Care Board), are the only evidence-based strength and balance exercise for those suffering frequent falls. The service has again exceeded its target number of **136** with **150** people starting the 20-week programme in 2024-25.



Our **Digital Champions Project** consists of 15 active and dedicated volunteers who are helping with a range of activities, with an average of **324** hours of tuition given throughout the year. Drop-in sessions take place at The Core every Thursday morning, as well as **8** clients receiving a home visit tuition session.



Our **Volunteers** have been absolutely wonderful again this year, without them we could not achieve a fraction of the great outcomes we enjoy. **300** people actively volunteered, contributing **15,157** hours to the Charity and our clients. This is worth **£219,777** of in-kind support, time, enthusiasm, energy, knowledge and expertise. We welcome volunteers into all areas of our work, whether that be welcoming people to our Community Advice Hubs, befriending clients in person or by phone, driving people to PSI classes, helping with benefit claims, or at our clubs, supporting our services or as Trustees.



How we raise our funds



Age UK Solihull's unrestricted income in 2024-25 was **£480,680** which was derived from our **charity shop** and **social enterprise** and **donations**, allowing us to deliver on our core objectives of **improving later life**.

Highlights

Sales during 2024-25 at our shop at Hobs Moat Road, Solihull totalled

£113,108



Income from our Home Support Service amounted to

£174,360



Our Fundraising Team raised

£198,225,

of which **£157,064**

was unrestricted.



We were pleased with the success of **sponsored skydives and run events**, our **Christmas** fundraising activities, and the incredible generosity of those who kindly left **legacies** to support our work.

Financial Review

In 2024-25 our total incoming resources were **£1,891,000** and our total expenditure was **£1,781,000**.

92p in every £1 was spent on our charitable activities.

Income by source



Voluntary income
£185,000



Retail
£113,000



Charged for services
£223,000



Income from charitable activities
£1,326,000



Fundraising activities
£14,000



Interest
£30,000

Charitable Expenditure



Enabling older people
£944,000



Promoting positive attitudes
£0



Supporting older people
£294,000



Working with and for older people
£401,000

Other Expenditure



Cost of generating funds
£142,000



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 – company number 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 was in place until December 2024, when a new Age UK Network Agreement was signed.

Today, Age UK Solihull is a medium sized organisation, employing 59 staff (full and part time) and has one of the largest volunteer help-forces in the borough.



Charity Number: 1055887