

Statement of Service & Client Care Standards

Age UK Surrey (AUKS) was formed in 1964 and is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. AUKS is a stand-alone charity and brand partner of Age UK. AUKS has a team of staff and volunteers and is managed on a day-to-day basis by its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who reports to a Board of Trustees. AUKS aims to help people in Surrey to live well and make the most of later life.

Surrey is a county of wealth disparity with parts of the county are amongst the wealthiest areas in the UK and in others, people are living in poverty. Statistics show that generally people in Surrey live longer than the national average. This has an impact on the resources needed to care for and support older people.

The Service aims to:

- Provide free, confidential, independent, comprehensive information and advice to people age 50+ living in Surrey.
- Provide generalist advice on a range of issues including employment rights, welfare benefits, housing, legal issues, relationships, and consumer rights.
- Work with other professionals to ensure older people are aware of the services available to them.
- Keep up to date with any changes affecting older people and disseminate this knowledge as appropriate.
- Obtain funding to continue to provide the service.
- Monitor and evaluate service provision and utilise this to develop the service
- Encourage feedback from clients to support development of the service
- Ensure all older people in Surrey can access the service whether by telephone, email, SMS text, office visit, outreach, or home visits.
- Promote the service throughout the county.

The Service will answer enquiries from:

Any Surrey resident or anyone who has an enquiry relating to an older person living in Surrey.

Enquirers can access the service.

1. By telephone

Age UK Surrey Enquiries 01483 503414 / SMS 07593 139560
Open Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm but this can vary. Directions to the website and Age UK National outside of these opening times.

2. By email

enquiries@ageuksurrey.org.uk

3. Drop-in

10am-12pm Monday at The Clockhouse Milford.

4. **By office appointments**

Available at The Clockhouse, Milford and other office locations in the county. Occasionally clients visit the office without an arranged appointment. On these occasions, advisers will try to help them at that time if possible or arrange an alternative appointment date.

4. **By home visits** – Following a telephone enquiry an adviser may need to visit a client in their own home if the enquiry cannot be answered over the phone. Examples include completing benefit application forms and sorting out complex benefits issues.

5. **By outreach appointments** – Drop-in sessions can be arranged at locations across the county.

The Service answers enquiries on any topic relating to people over age 50 and includes.

- Claiming welfare benefits
- Community Care e.g., care at home, residential care, safeguarding.
- Housing issues e.g., housing options, homelessness, property repairs
- Support available in the home e.g., domestic chores, gardening, befriending.
- Safety and security e.g., Telecare, advice on home security
- Healthy living e.g., social and fitness activities
- Support for carers
- Equipment e.g., home adaptations where to get a stair lift

Age UK Surrey cannot provide:

- Consumer debt advice
- Financial advice
- Immigration advice
- Legal Advice

In any instance where the service is unable to help a client the adviser will do their best to signpost or refer a client to another service that can help them, with a preference being given to AQS mark holders.

Client Feedback

Clients can feedback via telephone, email, post or in person. Client feedback is summarised annually, and results are given to Department Manager for any action and included in the next relevant Board Report.

Resources

The Service uses a variety of resources to answer enquiries. These include:

- Age UK factsheets, information guides and website links

- Traders4u (Trading Standards approved), Checkatrade and Trust in Blue websites – advisers can search for relevant trades' people in the client's area
- Web search
- Surrey Information Point
- Surrey Welfare Rights Unit – expert advisers on welfare and benefits

Clients are entitled to receive the following:

- **Independent Advice** - all clients will be given advice that is independent and does not favour a particular organisation or service e.g., funders or trading services. Clients will be offered options that are relevant to their needs for them to make an informed decision. The only exception to this is if a Conflict of Interest is identified (refer to the Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedure).
- **Free Advice** - the Service is free to the client. If advisers refer the client to another organisation any known charges will be explained.
- **Provide Consent** - clients are asked for their consent to record and share information where relevant. Outreach and home visit clients are asked to sign a form to give their consent. Further details regarding consent can be found in the Consent Procedure.
- **Response Times** - advisers aim to respond to telephone and email enquiries within three working days. Enquiries received via our professional referral form and from the website within four working days.
- **Progress of a Case** - clients will be kept informed about how their case is progressing, normally within five working days of their enquiry.
- **Confidentiality** – all enquiries are treated as confidential, and a client's consent is needed to share information with a third party (refer to Confidentiality and Consent procedure). In exceptional circumstances a client's details may need to be shared with another organisation for example, safeguarding of a vulnerable adult (refer to Age UK Surrey Confidentiality Policy).
- **Policies** – All staff members and volunteers adhere to the organisation's policies and procedures.

Quality Standards

Our advice service is regulated by: Age UK Information and Advice Quality Program (IAQP) and the national Advice Quality Standard (AQS)

Statement agreed: July 2023

Review Date: September 2024

Sign off: CEO