

# The power of **connection**



## Our Impact

**2025/26**

# Making connections that matter

The thread running through our impact report this year is **connection**. It's one of the key pillars of our work, at the heart of everything we do.

It's there in the information and advice we give, helping people find their way through a confusing system to access the support they're entitled to. It's there when we help someone stay active and independent, so they can keep getting out and about in their community. And it's there in the friendships we help build, when loneliness and isolation are tackled head-on by friendly faces, a welcoming space, or just someone who cares and checks in.

Connecting people to what they need can be life changing. This year has been extraordinary in terms of tackling poverty. Our small but exceptional Information & Advice team helped 1,547 older people access a record £6.5 million in benefits, grants and discounts – £1.7 million more than the year before. Behind every one of those figures is a person whose worry has eased, and perhaps whose fridge is fuller, and home is warmer.

But our work goes far beyond a benefits calculation. It's in the clubs, groups and community activities that help people stay active and well, reducing the need for GP visits and hospital admissions. It's in the home visits that reach those who can't leave the house, so no one is forgotten. And it's in the thousands of conversations, big and small, that remind an older person they matter and they are not alone.

**None of this happens without the extraordinary commitment of our staff and volunteers, and the generosity of our funders, partners and donors. Together, you make it possible for us to keep older people connected – to information, to their community, and to each other.**

Demand remains high and we know that every investment in our charity goes a long way. For every £1 given to our Information & Advice team, we secure around £24 for older people in need.

Whether you're a funder, fundraiser, partner or supporter, thank you for standing with us. Together, we're connecting people to the support they need, the community they love, and the people who matter most.

Best wishes,



**Helen Rice**

Chief Executive

Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove



# Loneliness and the power of connection

***“Loneliness can be heartbreaking. Some people who call our helpline describe going days, or even weeks, without meaningful conversation.” Liz Ansell, Information & Advice Manager, Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove***

People who feel lonely are at an increased risk of heart disease, stroke, depression and more than twice as likely to develop dementia. It's a growing problem in Sussex, with recent research indicating that levels of loneliness and social isolation rose by more than 5% in just 18 months. This tallies with our experience – we received 2,457 referrals for older people experiencing loneliness and isolation this year, making connection more important than ever.

Vital funding through the NHS, local government and grant giving bodies, alongside generous donations from individuals and corporate partners support our work, enabling us to be there for those feeling lonely or isolated. Our clubs, classes and centres, alongside our Home Visiting and Gift of Friendship Service mean thousands have company, companionship and a listening ear – good for both mental and physical health.

The impact of our intervention can be stark, ***“Without my visit, my client might see nobody for days.”*** Age UK WSBH Volunteer

The benefits cut both ways ***“I’ve genuinely enjoyed being able to provide support and encouragement, making people aware that they do have community and connections that care.”*** Age UK WSBH Volunteer

Those feeling lonely or isolated find our support incredibly helpful:

***“I’m so grateful and happy that Jane comes to see me. I would like to thank you all for the work that you do, it means a great deal to me.”***

***“I am happy having you visit. It has been a real lift mentally and emotionally.”***

Our focus is on helping people make positive changes, which have an ongoing impact.

***‘I feel more relaxed, have a clearer mind, I’m more confident and have more belief in myself’***

***“I feel more like myself again...I never thought I’d feel that way again”***

Together, we can turn isolation into connection, and connection into lasting change.

# Our year in numbers

Our customer service helpline  
handled over

**22,000**  
calls.

We put a combined total of over

**£6.5 million**

into the pockets of older people, by helping them  
access benefits, grants and discounts.

We helped transport  
people from hospital and settled them  
safely back at home.

**1,757**

One of our clients now receives

**£20,500**

a year extra income, due to  
our intervention.

We logged over

**70,000**

attendances at our clubs, classes & clinics.

We gave practical help to

**1,400**

people worried about  
staying warm in winter.

Our Dementia Services  
provided more than

**26,000**

hours of direct support to those in need.

**1,984**

customers used  
our Home Help or Gardening Services.

We saw a **100%**

increase in face-to-face  
customers at our Brighton Hub.

We helped one man access unclaimed pension  
payments of

**£97,000**

– extraordinary and absolutely life changing for him.

# Prevention, Early Support and Social Impact \*

Our aim is to help people remain healthy, independent, informed and connected. These four pillars underpin everything we do.

We are uniquely placed to identify concerns early and provide support before problems escalate into crisis. By working alongside older people in their communities, we help them access the right support at the right time, maintain their independence and improve their wellbeing.

Investment in our charity enables us to:

- **Identify emerging risks early**, including loneliness, frailty, reduced mobility and declining wellbeing.
- **Promote healthy ageing and independence** through social and physical activities, advice, support and opportunities that build confidence, resilience and social connection.
- **Connect people to the right support**, helping them navigate local services, community organisations and statutory provision.
- **Strengthen local communities** by bringing together volunteers, partners, community groups and public services to support older people closer to home.
- **Provide ongoing preventative support**, helping people stay well, remain independent and avoid reaching crisis point.

**The result is better outcomes for older people, stronger communities, and reduced pressure on health and care services.**

## Our social impact



Reduce demand  
on health & care  
services



Build  
stronger  
communities



Greater  
economic  
resilience



Better  
quality  
of life



A positive  
experience  
of ageing

# Connecting People to Information, Advice and Support

When people have access to trusted information, they can make informed decisions about their health, finances and future. Our Information and Advice Service connects older people to the support available to them, helping to reduce anxiety, improve financial security and increase confidence.

The right information at the right time can change the course of someone's life.

**Peter \***

## **"I couldn't afford to put the lights on"**

Without Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, I would have missed out on everything I was entitled to for my pension.

Before I found them, I had to sit without any lights on. **I didn't eat properly - I only bought what I could afford, whatever was on the yellow ticket.** I went to food banks, but it's embarrassing, and they didn't always have what I needed. Every penny had to be spread out.

Then I went to see Will at the Brighton Hub, and afterwards, my life was magic. **I now get £900 a month just for me.** That's so much money compared to what I had before. If I want a fish and chip meal, I can have it. Will even got me a bus pass I didn't know I was entitled to, so now I go out every Saturday and Sunday just to get myself out into the world.

I can run my water without worrying. I can shop without being frightened to buy something.

I have a purpose again. I don't come home wondering what I've spent and what I'm going to do.

I like to see someone face to face, and that's exactly what I got. The Brighton Hub is such a friendly place, and everyone there was lovely and wanted to help. When Will first told me how much I was entitled to, I looked at him in disbelief. I couldn't believe he'd got it right!

Now I want to give back. I donate to Age UK WSBH myself and I would do anything for this charity - it's the least I can do. It changed my life.

**Due to our intervention, Peter now gets over £20,500 per year extra income.**

*\*Name and image have been changed to protect the customer's identity.*



# Our Services

- Information & Advice
- Support at Home After Hospital
- Take Home & Settle (hospital transport)
- Digital Skills Service
- Wellbeing support
- Gym & exercise classes
- Centres & Clubs
- Help at Home
- Community Agents
- Dementia & Carers Support
- Home Visiting Service
- Social Prescribing
- Gift of Friendship (befriending)

If you, or someone you know could benefit from any of the services or support above, please get in touch using the contact details below.

# Thank you!

We couldn't be more grateful to each individual, organisation or funder who enables our vital work, helping to change how we age.

If you're new to us and you'd like to get involved you can:



**Donate**



**Volunteer**



**Fundraise**



***Help us change lives, one connection at a time.***