

2025 - 2026

# Business Plan







# The Age UK Family

Age UK is the country's leading charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life. As a national charity across the UK, we help millions of people every year by providing support, companionship, and advice to those who need it most.

## Local

The Age UK Network, which includes Age UK Wigan Borough, is a partnership of approximately 120 independent charities under the Age UK brand. Local Age UK partners adhere to agreed quality standards, enabling them to be part of this network.

## National

Age UK is committed to transforming the experience of aging in the UK. From offering specialist, impartial advice to conducting research and campaigning, we strive to improve how people age now and in the future.

Age Co. is an integral part of the Age UK family, offering products and services that help people make the most of later life. Profits from Age Co. go to Age UK, and we receive commissions for successful referrals, supporting our mission to help those in need.

## International

Age International operates in over 30 developing countries. It is a member of the Help Age global network and the Disasters Emergency Committee, working to improve the lives of older people worldwide.

# Mission Statement

We improve the quality of life for local people aged 50 and over. We provide services to ensure people have the information they need to live their lives as they choose, can live safely in their own homes and combat loneliness and isolation. We make sure the voices of local people are heard and can influence improvement to local services.



## Our Objectives

We will;

- Deliver services across the Borough to ensure we reach as many lonely and isolated people as possible and make a significant impact on their lives.
- Co-ordinate information to empower local people, supporting them to get their voices heard to influence local services.
- Work with other stakeholder organisations, locally and nationally, to improve and increase services for people 50 and over.
- Be a great place to work, our staff and volunteers are our greatest assets, we value the work they do.
- Develop a robust annual business plan, providing actions to support of strategic objectives, achieve value for money (VFM) and identify sustainable funding sources to benefit people 50 and over, now and in the future.







At Age UK Wigan Borough,  
we lead the way with  
PRIDE

# Our Values



**01**

**Person Centred**

The needs of older people are at the forefront of what we do.



**02**

**Respectful**

We treat older people with the respect that they are due and recognise the contribution they have made to society.



**03**

**Innovative**

If we are faced with a difficult problem, we won't give up.



**04**

**Dynamic**

Our organisation is constantly changing and we are quick to adapt to external pressures.



**05**

**Empowering**

We aim to support older people to become stronger, more confident and in control of their lives.



# 2024 Review

In 2024, we began the year with the positive news that we had been awarded funding from NHS Charities to establish a new service, Steps to Success.

This service provides short-term, one-to-one support to help individuals re-engage with their interests, social activities, and communities. We are already witnessing the transformative impact of this support, which is enhancing independence and improving well-being.

Our Information and Advice Team continues to tackle poverty within our Borough by helping residents claim over £2 million in additional income that they may have otherwise missed out on. An astounding 76% of individuals surveyed stated that they would not know where else to turn for help and support.



Quality services are of paramount importance to us at Age UK Wigan Borough, and we were thrilled to retain our Charity Quality Standard, an externally assessed quality mark. Additionally, we achieved the quality standard for our Information and Advice service. We continuously gather customer feedback to refine and enhance our services wherever possible.

Our Bright Days programme has experienced significant growth, offering a wide range of activities across most areas of the Borough. Over the course of the year, we recorded more than 8,000 attendances from local residents, an increase of over 1,000 compared to the previous year.

Looking forward to 2025, we are delighted to be planning our 30th anniversary celebrations and hope to continue for another 30 years, helping the people of Wigan Borough.



# Transforming Lives

At Age UK Wigan Borough, we are committed to delivering exceptional, tailored services that respond to the changing needs of our community. By the end of 2024, 99.5% of service users rated our services as very good or excellent, highlighting our dedication to excellence and positive impact.

**Improving Lives Through Financial Support** Our Information & Advice (I&A) service is a critical resource for tackling poverty and supporting financial well-being. In 2024, we secured nearly £2 million in additional income for local residents by assisting with claims for Attendance Allowance, Pension Credits, and other benefits. This offers essential financial security to vulnerable individuals.

**Promoting Independence and Safety at Home** Through our Support at Home service, we empower older adults to maintain independence. Our Handyperson service provides vital support by installing equipment to prevent falls, reducing A&E visits, and enhancing safety.

**In 2024, we delivered an 11% increase in Home Help hours, with 81% of customers finding it easier to manage their homes.**

Handypersons also completed nearly 3,200 jobs, ensuring 68% of customers felt safer and more confident in their homes.

## **Transforming Lives Through Connection and Confidence**

At the heart of our mission is a commitment to combat lone-liness and inspire positivity. Our Bright Days activities programme continues to be a resounding success, engaging over 600 participants every month. Impressively, 49% of attendees report feeling less lonely, while 60% say they experience a more positive outlook as a result of these sessions. One participant shared, "Bright Days has been a life-line for me, helping me build friendships and find joy again." In February 2024, we launched Steps to Success, a personalised support service aimed at helping individuals achieve their aspirations and rebuild connections with their community, friends, and interests. This service specifically addresses isolation and loneliness, empowering participants to take meaningful steps toward a brighter future. Although still in its early stages, the program is already delivering exceptional outcomes: 90% of participants feel more positive, 71% are more active, and 86% report increased confidence. We aim to expand our initiatives to foster independence, safety, and financial well-being, supporting more individuals in leading fulfilling lives. By addressing loneliness and promoting mental health, we strive to make a lasting, positive impact on the communities we serve.



# Our Priorities 2025-26

The proposed budget for next year reflects our vision for Age UK Wigan Borough and aligns with our one-year business plan. This plan forms part of our broader three-year corporate strategy for 2023-2026, which outlines the long-term objectives of our charity. We have carefully considered the key themes and actions required for the coming year to support the achievement of these goals, as detailed in our priorities below.

## Our Approach

We remain committed to building strong relationships with local decision-makers and fostering cross-sector partnerships to create opportunities that shape services for people aged 50 and over across Wigan Borough. At the heart of our organisation are our dedicated staff and volunteers, and we are devoted to maintaining a positive culture of health and well-being in the workplace – an ethos that underpins all our service delivery.

During 2024 we collaborated with the national Age UK network to implement the new Network Agreement and Strategy, Our Shared Future. This initiative will bring fresh approaches to service delivery, ensuring that the needs of older people remain at the core of everything we do. Age UK Wigan Borough will strive to:

- Be the first point of contact for older people.
- Deliver services that are both person-centred and meet the needs of older people.
- Tackle loneliness and isolation within our community.

## Our Priorities for 2025-26

We have identified the following priorities for the year ahead:

- Leverage our role as an anchor organisation to advocate for and influence services across Wigan Borough for people aged 50+. We aim to empower residents and groups to shape local services and plans.
- Secure sustainable income streams to support our existing services in a challenging funding environment while maintaining efficiency and value for money.
- Seek opportunities to expand and innovate our services to address local needs, align with our strategic goals, and close service gaps.
- Continually improve the quality of our services for people aged 50+, supporting our staff and volunteers through periods of change and transformation.
- Enhance our data collection and management processes to clearly demonstrate the positive impact our services have on local residents.
- Strengthen collaboration with other voluntary sector organisations in Wigan Borough, as well as Age UK groups in Greater Manchester and the national charity, to better address and highlight local needs.



# The Local Context

Age UK WB wouldn't be able to develop and deliver services that really matter to older people without working in partnership with a wide range of key partners and stakeholders. More now than ever we aim to work closely with Wigan Council, Health Services, our local Hospital Trust (WWL) and a strong Voluntary and Community Sector across the whole borough.

We recognise working in partnership enhances the quality of services we deliver and we have strong working relationships with Citizens Advice Wigan Borough, Wigan & Leigh Carers, Groundwork and Wigan Council. As we see greater devolution of budgets and decision making to the Greater Manchester (GM) conurbation, our relationships are being reshaped in some areas to a regional level.

## Statutory Sector

Wigan Borough Council has reviewed its long term strategy, the Progress with Unity plan is the Council's new movement for change for the next decade. The Council aims to build on its successes and opportunities created during the last 10 years but also the lessons learned along the way. It's responsible for commissioning social care, housing and many regeneration services. Leisure and cultural services, including parks, leisure centres and museums, are managed by Be Well.

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership oversee the devolution of our health and social care services as we move to the Integrated Care System. The Partnership is a collaboration for more effective health services across the ten GM boroughs: from charities, patients and community groups to NHS GPs and hospitals, councils, fire and

police services. The main health service provider in the area is Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust.

## Voluntary Sector

Voluntary sector providers range from small community groups such as church groups to major national charities that provide services within Wigan Borough. Local voluntary organisations are under increasing financial pressure as grants and contracts are tightening due to the difficult financial climate. Age UK Wigan Borough is a member of the Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Leadership Group recently formed to support the sector in Wigan.

## Private Sector

There are many private organisations providing services to local older people. Care in the home is mainly provided by for-profit organisations, often operating as a Community Interest Company. There are also many individuals who work in a self-employed capacity supporting local older people. The majority of residential and nursing homes are run by independent companies. In addition, there are a wide range of leisure opportunities which older people can access within the private sector.



# Evidence of Need

**Demographics:** 19.2% of Wigan's population are aged 65 and over, higher than the national average of 18.5%. This growing demographic places additional demand on health, care, and housing services.

**Changing Living Arrangements:** Increasing numbers of older residents are living alone or aging without children, necessitating stronger social networks and community-based support systems.

**Poverty in Later Life:** Across the UK, 20% of women aged 65 and over live in poverty, compared to 16% of men. Gender inequalities in pensions, lower lifetime earnings, and caregiving responsibilities contribute to this disparity. Many older people are not

claiming benefits they are entitled to, such as pension credit and attendance allowance. Local campaigns to raise awareness and simplify benefit access could help alleviate financial hardship.

**Integrated Services:** The Healthier Wigan Partnership continues to integrate health and care services into the community, making them more accessible to older residents.

**Sustainable Workforce:** Efforts to create rewarding career opportunities in health and social care are crucial to meet the growing demand for services. People aged 50+ find it increasingly difficult to access paid work, resulting in a loss of skills and experience in the local workforce.



**Let's change  
how we age**

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