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2020-
2021

An Exceptional Year - An Exceptional Response

The year 2020-21 has probably been one of the most dramatic in 25 years of Age UK Wigan Borough as the Covid 19 pandemic took hold. However, we remained open throughout, reconfiguring our services to provide essential support to older people in Wigan Borough.



1200 food parcels/hampers
distributed



10,618 check and chat
phone calls



1715 free shops/
prescription collections
and 558 paid for shops
through our Home
Help service



Around 440 attendances a
month to Bright Days activities
by Zoom or phone



1,863,394 gained in benefits for people
needing support to claim funds

We Support Older People:

- ✓ To become involved in the local community and to be valued;
- ✓ To remain safely at home for as long as possible;
- ✓ To get the services and support that they are entitled to;
- ✓ To be as independent as possible;
- ✓ To stay out of hospital and to come home from hospital safely;
- ✓ To keep active, pursue new hobbies, make new friendships and continue to learn new things in order to prevent loneliness;
- ✓ To be financially secure.

Working in Partnership with:

About the People We Have Supported

We have supported 3479 individual older people in 2020-2021.

- 50% are over the age of 75 and 31 were over 95 years of age
- 75% have a disability
- 63% are female
- 52% live alone

The oldest person that we supported was 101 years old. She lives alone in private accommodation in Ashton-in-Makerfield. She had support from our Handyperson service to enable a safe hospital discharge.

New Activities Programme

Bright Days developed a programme of activities by phone and Zoom. 90% of participants have said that they would like activities to continue, even when external activities open up again.



For those less confident with technology, we had a Switch On IT Helpdesk which ran for two months. We also offered an option of receiving a weekly quiz and activity pack.

Chair's Report

April 2020 to March 2021 was a year that I do not think anyone would wish to repeat. Plans were under consideration to celebrate 25 years of Age Concern/Age UK in Wigan and also 10 years of the highly successful Bright Days Programme. It transpired that neither celebration was able to take place.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented and unforeseen challenges to the work of Age UK Wigan Borough. From the beginning of the year, and indeed throughout the year, our services needed to be agile and responsive to the immediate and direct needs of older people. This primarily focussed on important practical tasks e.g. ensuring that shopping and prescriptions were collected and delivered and that older people received calls to ensure they were safe and well.

The Home Help and Handyperson service continued often undertaking different tasks but still to fulfil the needs of older people. Information and Advice and Advocacy successfully adapted to provide help through telephone conversations rather than a face-to-face meeting.

Our Bright Days programme quickly adapted to provide on-line Zoom and telephone-led activities. Around 440 participants per month enjoyed a range of quizzes, sing-a-longs and other social activities. Monthly activity packs were posted to clients to encourage social inclusion and mental stimulation.

I was immensely proud of the staff and the tasks they undertook during the pandemic to meet the needs of the older people of Wigan.

My thanks to those individuals, and organisations, who have made donations this year, they are greatly appreciated.

Finally I would like to offer sincere thanks to the Chief Officer, John McArdle (who left us in July to take up a new job), the staff and volunteers for their continued commitment to help older people in Wigan Borough. I would also like to thank members of the Board who have given of their time freely and quickly adapted to attending Zoom meetings.

Food Action Together

We were pleased to receive funding from the Soil Association to develop a new project about Food and Gardening activities. As soon as we got the money, the pandemic started so our planned activities moved onto social media and on-line.

Swap a recipe, Share a memory used asked for people's food memories and a group of older people developed a presentation about food in Wigan and beyond. This was then shared with Wigan Archives in an on-line session.

'My Grandad was a train driver in the steam train era and they used to cook a cooked breakfast on their shovels.'

FAcT has also developed a virtual gardening group, handing out Funky Veg kits to individuals, schools and care homes. People are enjoying sharing pictures of the plants as they grow.



Lilian entertained people on our Facebook pages by reading out her poetry. She collated her poems into a book which she sold on our behalf.

During the first lockdown, we asked people to become 'Lockdown Film-stars' and tell us about what they are doing to keep active.

Dorothy spoke about using the time to develop her painting skills.



Edith's Story

Edith is 87 and lives alone on the outskirts of Wigan Borough with no local family. In the past Edith went out regularly to keep fit and a lunch club. She found the initial lockdown in March 2020 to be devastating. All contact stopped and she said that she started to stay in bed longer each day and was suffering from extreme anxiety. Her GP diagnosed panic attacks. She struggled to get shopping and had little exercise as she was afraid to go out walking along in case she fell.

Edith had received support from our Home Help service and we rang her to check she was coping. She told us how frightened she was shopping so we provided this for her during the first lock down. Once Home Help started up again in July 2020, she had a Home Helper to clean her home once a fortnight.

Edith's GP suggested that she try on-line activities and she got in contact with our Bright Days service in September 2020. She started with one session and began to take them all, joining in activities every week. She continues to do this and is pleased that the activities will be continuing even as life 'gets back to normal'. She was also interested in our FAcT Growing Club and received a funky veg kit to plant in March 2021, joining others on Zoom to talk about the progress of their gardening.

'I get up every day now and put on some nice clothes and some make up, knowing that I will actually get to see people on Zoom'

Many thanks to Lennon who raised £685 by running 26 miles over 4 weeks. During lockdown his great grandad received a devastating cancer diagnosis and Lennon wanted to support older people who don't have a good family and support around them.



Staff and Volunteers

In 2012-21, we had an average of 46 staff members. Sadly, as Covid 19 struck many of our older volunteers have not been able to continue to work with us but we have had the support of around 9 people throughout the year.

Our Friends and Family Test

99.6% say they would recommend our services to their families and friends.

Donations

In 2020-21, we received donations totalling £15,630. We are grateful to the following who donated £50 or more:

Mr J Banks
Jonathan Barton
Mr & Mrs Bishop
Mr B Bradshaw
J & M Carson
Mr B Cavadino
Mr P Dickinson
M Dunn
Mrs Garside
Ian Gray
Mr & Mrs Hayes
Mrs Hoy
Teri Jones
M Knight
Eric Lilley
Mrs J McFadyen
Hilda Moyatt
Mrs P O'Neil
Miss M Rowe
Mrs Tyack
Mrs R Webb
Maureen Wilson

Mrs B Barker
Mr & Mrs Bell
Mr R Bond
Mrs Brown
Mr A Cash
Mrs Culshaw
Mrs M Doherty
Mr Fitzpatrick
Christine Gleave
Mr & Mrs Greenall
Mrs J Hindle
Mrs V Jackson
Mr & Mrs Joyce
Mr & Mrs Leaver
Mr & Mrs Lilley
Mr & Mrs Middleton
A Newton
Mrs D Parry
Mrs J Soltysiak
Mr & Mrs Waite
Mr T Westwell
Jim Winstanley

Mrs M Barlow
Mrs J Birtles
Mrs G Bownass
Mr Callard
Mr & Mrs Catterall
Mr & Mrs Dawson
Mrs M Dumbell
Mr & Mrs Garside
Lilian Goulding
Mr A Gregory
Mrs B Houghton
G Jones
Mr E King
D T Lewis
Mr & Mrs Marshall
Mrs J Milner
Mr P O'Donnell
Mrs S Rook
Mrs Speakman
Mrs B Ward
Mrs B Whittell
Mr J Woodcock

We were grateful for support from:

Age UK, Asda Wigan, The Charity Service, Citizens Advice Wigan Borough, Clem Turton, Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund, Forever Manchester, Greater Manchester High Sheriff's Police Trust, Kraft Heinz, Medicash Foundation, Tela Technology, Tesco Bags of Help, The Eric Wright Charitable Trust, The Family of St Wilfrid's Church, The Lottery Community Fund, Wigan Borough Community Partnership, Wigan Council, Wigan Rotary

We continue to strive for excellence in all that we do. In 2020-21, we achieved or retained a range of externally accredited quality awards:



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Standard



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