

AGE UK WILTSHIRE

News and Views

CEO Message - Providing Support, Encouraging Independence

Welcome to the fourth issue of our external newsletter. Sarah Cardy gives her reflections on the ever-present demand for our services:

‘Our growth plans are moving along at pace. Our new Salisbury shop opened at the beginning of December. It got off to a flying start, with lots of customers and a flow of donations. It is a very welcoming shop and information hub. We have got the keys to our new shop in Bradford-on-Avon and are in the process of staffing it and fitting it out. It is another bright shop which will also have information about our services. It is located near the train station and doctor's surgery. We are hoping to open our Marlborough and Devizes shops fairly soon.

We have had a number of audits in the past few months. I am delighted to report that we have been awarded the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) both for the Southampton and Wiltshire Information & Advice services. There was a huge amount of work that went into these audits. There was a lot of good practice highlighted.

We have also passed our Charity Quality Standard (CQS). This validates the great work across the whole of the organisation.

We have opened a new service in Swindon to help prevent falls. The service is aimed at supporting people who are at risk of falling and we are focusing on more isolated people. We will have a guided conversation with people who are referred to us to find out what they would like to achieve, help them engage in local community events and support them in getting more mobile so they can live independently for longer.’ See more details further on in the newsletter.



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News and updates

CHARITY SHOPS



At the beginning of December, and after a lot of hard work behind the scenes we celebrated the opening of our brand new Salisbury Charity Shop.

The grand opening of the Age UK Wiltshire Charity Shop in Salisbury took place on the 7th December, with Salisbury Older People's Champion, Irene Kohler cutting the ribbon. The shop is staffed by friendly volunteers dedicated to providing great customer service while promoting the organisation's mission to improve the lives of older people in Wiltshire.

This shop is an excellent opportunity for Age UK Wiltshire to have more of a central presence. These high street centres will include office space for our I&A advisors, providing the opportunity for residents to have accessible, face to face appointments. We are also working hard towards the opening of Bradford-on-Avon, Marlborough and Devizes shops.



Although this is a great retail opportunity, the success of our charity shops is not just about selling items - it's about transforming generosity into tangible support for older people in our communities.

We still require good quality donations. If you have any pre-loved items that you are happy to donate, please drop these off at one of our four local donation drop-off locations. Any donations are gratefully received and will directly impact the services we can provide to older people in our communities.

“Supporting an Older Person, One Donation at a Time”

Organisation News and Updates:

Living Well

Through our Living Well service we have a team of Age UK Wiltshire staff, based within GP surgeries, providing a wide range of support to older patients.

Alongside visiting individuals, we also go to local events spreading the news of our services.

In December, our Living Well team attended the Christmas Carers Coffee & Chat event at Hathaway Medical Centre to promote Age UK Wiltshire and the Living Well service. It was fantastic to speak to some people who benefited from signposting to relevant services.

The Living Well service reduces the amount of contact patients have with the surgery for non-medical concerns. One surgery we work with has reviewed the number of consultations a patient received in the eight months prior to Living Well referral, compared to the eight months after first contact, and has found that the number of surgery consultations reduced by 314% following the referral.



“Age UK have been brilliant, you've done so much for me, I don't know what I'd have done without you.”

Organisation News and Updates:



National Benevolent Charity

We were delighted to receive a grant from the National Benevolent Charity, to increase the capacity of the Information and Advice Service to enable targeted outreach to those experiencing pensioner poverty in Tidworth. This town has the highest pensioner poverty level in Wiltshire, so we are keen to make sure people living there are able to access our support, particularly to maximise their income



Partnership working with the Integrated Care System (ICS)

We have been working closely with a project team to help improve the information available for patients, their families and carers, when people are leaving hospital. There is lots of information online about the 'Caring Steps Together' project. Paper copies are also being made available in Hospitals and wider community locations.

You can find out more [here](#).

Organisation News and Updates:

Padwell Road Day Care Centre- Southampton



Our members at Padwell Road Day Care Centre celebrated Indoor Plant Day, the plants kindly donated by B & Q Nursling Southampton

To find out about our other services head over to our [website](#).

If you have any questions about our services, please just get in touch.

Sarah Cardy, CEO: sarah.cardy@ageukwiltshire.org.uk

Kate Brooks, Operations Manager: kate.brooks@ageukwiltshire.org.uk

Swindon Falls Prevention project- Supportive Independence

Age is recognised as one of the key risk factors for falls, with around a third of people aged 65 and over (plenty of them in good health and not frail), and around half of people aged 80 and over, falling at least once a year.

Our new service will support people to remain independent in their homes and empower them to take charge of their health, wellbeing and independence, helping them to become less likely to fall.

We will help people to get more connected and increase their activity, at home and in their communities.

Within this project we can support anyone over the age of 65, living in Swindon. We're working closely with the Swindon Borough Council Live Well team, as part of the Swindon Falls Collaborative. We are particularly keen to reach people who don't regularly see their GP and don't receive support from Adult Social Care.

Through the service we can offer a range of support, starting with a Guided Conversation, usually at someone's own home, to find out what matters to them. Where there are barriers to getting out and about - transport, confidence, money, information about what's going on in the local community - we'll work hard to reduce or remove these, for example providing support with transport. Rather than simply signposting someone to activities or groups in their area, we recognise that for many people having someone alongside them is crucial, so our volunteers will take outings or journeys with people as they gain confidence, building on our learning from our recent [Travel Friends project](#). We will check whether there are other factors which increase someone's risk of falling, for example medication, footwear, hearing, low / high blood pressure, and we'll check how safe the home environment is.

As part of this project we are expanding our Fitness & Friendship Clubs in Swindon. We currently have clubs in the town centre, Penhill and Freshbrook, with one more to be opened soon. We'd welcome thoughts about where this new club should be located, so please get in touch if you have thoughts on this - hugo.moura@ageukwiltshire.org.uk.

2023 REVIEW



Welfare check with Meals

- 12 x cars out a day, 364 days a year
- 1,300 healthy, hot meals a week or 67,600 meals during the year!

Information & Advice

- Clients – 4,632
- Contacts with or on behalf of clients – 14,030
- Enquiries – 8,203
- Benefits gained - £2.4 million a year

Charity Shops

Our brand new Salisbury Charity Shop and Information & Advice centre opened in December 2023.

Fitness & Friendship

- 19 clubs across the Wiltshire area
- 6 brand new clubs opened in 2023
- 306 registered members
- 46 amazing volunteers



Living Well

- 542 patients visited at home for a guided conversation
- More than 2,000 issues discussed

Self-help and further support

- The Age UK Wiltshire website received over 76,000 visits.

Melksham Community Support

- Guided conversations at 41 people's homes
- 168 issues discussed

Telephone Befriending

- Over 90 people received regular companionship from a telephone befriending volunteer

Join our team

Our website is regularly updated with all of our latest vacancies.



You can find out more [here](#)

Volunteer with us

We rely on volunteers to support the services we deliver. We welcome applications and support from all parts of the community and will work with people so they get the best experience possible from working with us.



If you are ready to volunteer with us then the first step is to read about our volunteer roles on our [website](#) and complete our application form. This is how we first get to know you and understand what you want to get out of volunteering.

Visit our website for more information about our services

www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk

Let's talk about: Winter Warmth

Our Surviving Winter Grant aims to support individuals with the cost of heating.

The Surviving Winter Grant was introduced by Wiltshire Community Foundation 10 years ago and has helped 1000's of vulnerable households in Wiltshire living in fuel poverty. This year they are working with Age UK Wiltshire, Wiltshire Citizens Advice, Swindon Citizens Advice, Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living, and Wiltshire Warm & Safe to help people who are experiencing fuel poverty by providing grants towards fuel or other heating related costs.

You, or a loved one, may be eligible for a Surviving Winter Grant towards your bills if you are on a lower income and concerned about the cost of heating.

Check if you're eligible for a £200 grant towards your bills and apply at: <https://rebrand.ly/wintergrant>. The scheme will run until March 2024 but may close early if all grants are allocated.

"The Surviving Winter grant will make an awful lot of difference, thank you."

