



IMPACT REPORT

2022 - 2023



*"Thank you for
helping me get my
life back"*

Jon*, Community Support client

**Name changed to protect privacy*

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Dear friends,

Welcome to our 2022-2023 annual impact report – we hope that you find the stories within inspiring and informative. We also hope that they shine a spotlight on the critical role that Age UK Sutton plays in older people's wellbeing and welfare at a time when older people, and the services that help them when life gets difficult, are under a level of pressure that has not been experienced in a generation.

We began the year with never-before-seen demand for all of our services, and this has continued to grow through the last 12 months. We have supported well over 4000 local residents, which is around one in thirteen local people over 55. As people grow older, they are more likely to need our help; this trend is demonstrated by the one in eight people over 75 in the Borough of Sutton that have sought our support in the last year. As an independent local charity, we are proud to be here for so many.

In the past year, 70% of people accessing Age UK Sutton's services are new to us. This is a sign of the changing patterns of need in our Borough – with the post pandemic impacts still felt strongly in our older population, and the cost of living crisis continuing to push people into impossible choices; people who have in the past 'managed' now simply can't. Sadly, this year we have met far more people who are struggling with major financial hardship; some unable to keep their home warm and safe, some restricting their eating to cut costs, and some living in fear of losing their home.

In a relatively affluent borough like Sutton this might be a surprise, but the hidden thousands living one day to the next are here in our communities, and increasingly reliant on charities like Age UK Sutton. As an independent local charity, we are glad to be a trusted source of support.

In response to these challenges, we have taken action. We have used what we learned during the height of the pandemic to hone our service delivery, improve our efficiency, and increase accessibility to everything we offer. We have launched new services for people experiencing severe and enduring mental ill health, to support lonely and isolated people to reconnect to their community, and worked with partner charities to offer a 'debt first aid' service. As an independent local charity, we work hard to design and deliver new services that are evidence based, and meet the needs of our community.

We want to take this opportunity to thank our supporters, donors, funders, partners, friends, staff, volunteers and trustees – as an independent local charity, our connection to the community means everything to us.

The cost of living crisis continues, and our context is changed for the long term. We are as committed as ever to rising to the challenges we face together.

With your support, we can do even more.



Nicola - CEO
Jan - Chair of
Trustees



Carol's story *

** The name has been changed to protect privacy*



Carol was living with a long-term mental illness including depression and self harm, magnified by the death of her mother and aunt, who she was very close to. Her siblings were supportive, but they would tell her to 'pull herself together.' Carol didn't feel they understood her mental illness.



As her mental health declined, Carol had to stop working. She felt ashamed, stressed by money worries and called herself 'a failure'. She was offered medication reviews and therapy, but this had a 10-12 month waiting list.

A mental health team referred Carol to Age UK Sutton's **Mental Health Peer Support Group (MHPS Group)**. Our Peer Support Worker (PSW) Carolina reached out and explained how the service might support Carol, and that the team have personal experience with mental health challenges. Carol felt the team would be able to understand her situation because of this lived experience.

Carol was signposted to a specialist charity for support with debt, but she had to register by phone – this process caused her a lot of anxiety.

Carolina supported Carol, listening to her worries and helping her to access the debt advice and support that she needed.

Carolina supported Carol to build confidence in getting out and about; including joining our peer support group for people with mental health conditions. Carol was hesitant at first but soon settled in, and shared she felt less alone and less self-critical as she was around others living with mental illness.



Carol felt better informed about her options and the support available. She told us she "felt welcomed as a black woman" to the group, and that she "no longer feel like a failure". Instead, she thought she could work her way to becoming a Peer Support Worker herself: "if others could do it then I could see a way for me to do it too."

Nita's story *

** The name has been changed to protect privacy*



Nita was admitted to hospital with pneumonia. For many years she had cared for her husband, Ghulan, who had dementia. While Nita was still in hospital, Ghulan died. Nita was devastated that she was unable to be with him in his final days.



Nita met Age UK Sutton's **Home from Hospital** worker Lou, and shared she was nervous about going out alone, managing food shopping, and getting to appointments or to the church group that meant a lot to her. She felt vulnerable, and her mood was low. Nita was also worried about money, and unsure how her husband's death would affect her ability to afford living costs, even on a frugal budget.

Lou worked with Nita to set goals including building up strength and stamina to reduce her fear of falling, and returning to her church group. Short term shopping support was also offered to Nita as a 'stop gap'.



Lou also provided information on Taxicards to enable Nita to go out, as local transport was poor. Lou agreed to check in with Nita each week on how her prescribed physiotherapy was going, as Nita knew she would be more motivated if she was held accountable for doing her exercises!

After an accompanied walk to get to an appointment, Nita gained the courage to do this with friends and eventually alone. Her stamina and stability improved, reducing her fear of falling. She also secured a Taxicard, and independently attended her church group and appointments.



Regular calls with Lou provided Nita with emotional support and the opportunity to talk about her progress and how she was getting on at a time when she didn't feel ready for formal bereavement support.

Nita was encouraged to celebrate her achievements and be patient with her recovery journey. Nita found the Home from Hospital service invaluable and was pleased with what she had accomplished.

Irma's story *

** The name has been changed to protect privacy*



Irma was referred to Age UK Sutton's **Dementia Peer Support Group**, after receiving a diagnosis of dementia. Her daughter Katrina was concerned her mother wasn't socialising, as Irma has always enjoyed other people's company and staying active as much as she can. They were struggling to find any social groups that were accessible for people living with dementia.

Irma wanted to meet people at the same stage of their dementia journey as she was, so she could socialise and get advice and support. Dementia Wellbeing Support officer, Jodie, introduced Irma and Katrina to the peer support group that met regularly for those living with a new / early stage diagnosis of dementia.



Both Irma and her daughter Katrina started to attend the group. They received personalised information on early-stage dementia, and were supported to connect with other specialist dementia services. Katrina was signposted to Sutton Carers Centre's peer support group for dementia carers.

Irma was able to interact and socialise with other people who were in the same position as her without the fear of being judged.

Joining the group helped Irma to relieve her loneliness, which considerably helped her wellbeing. She felt happier, supported in her diagnosis and better able to 'live life the way she chose'.

Irma made friends in the group and looked forward to meeting up at the next session. Katrina was satisfied that her mum's social life had vastly improved, and she was able to interact with people who are at the same stage of dementia that she is.



When feeding back on the Dementia Peer Support Group, Katrina told us "the sessions are amazing. My mum looks forward to every one! If we never came here, she wouldn't get out of the house. We are so pleased that something like this exists; it's wonderful."

Martin's story *

** The name has been changed to protect privacy*



Martin lives with chronic pain and progressive neurological issues that affect his mobility. He does not have a wide social network and has little contact with his family.

He privately rents a converted draughty garden building that is very cold.

He rarely goes out and spends most of the day laying on an old mattress which causes back pain.

Martin didn't ask his landlord for a new mattress because he feared eviction and unaffordable housing.



Feeling disillusioned with and misunderstood by health services, Martin said he felt he had “lost his mojo” and could not see a purpose in life anymore. He was referred to Age UK Sutton’s **Mental Health Peer Support** service, where he met Peer Support Worker Vari.

As Martin did not feel ready to join a group, Vari provided 1-2-1 peer support to understand his situation and what mattered to him, such as improving his living conditions.



As Martin was concerned about keeping warm and well over the winter, Vari provided him with a 'keep warm kit' and gave information on affordable heating options. She also went with Martin to purchase a new mattress through our grant-funded Special Support Fund. This had a positive impact on both his physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Vari also linked Martin in with Amy from our **Community Support** service for practical support and advice around his financial wellbeing. This empowered Martin to successfully apply for council tax support; relieving some money worries.

Martin didn't always feel open to seeing his peer support worker but Vari worked flexibly with him; providing gentle encouragement and welcoming him back when he felt ready to re-connect. Martin was able to build rapport with someone with their own experience of living with a mental health condition. This helped him to have faith in the service, where he could work at his own pace and feel confident in asking for support without fear of judgement.

Martin told us "it did the world of good to feel normal doing normal things again. I am grateful to Age UK Sutton."

Ada's story *

** The name has been changed to protect privacy*



Ada lived alone after her husband passed away. Due to her long-term health conditions including a compromised immune system and impaired mobility, she was unable to work. Ada was also afraid to leave the house because of the many messages she had received during the pandemic about shielding and the high risk of contamination and death for those classed as 'vulnerable'.

Ada called Age UK Sutton and spoke to helpline volunteer Anna, who told her about our **Let's Connect programme** and the support they offered to connect people feeling lonely or isolated to their community.



Ada was invited to a Let's Connect dance where she met Community Connections Officer, Sine. At that time, Ada did not feel ready to interact with anyone other than Sine. She did not join in with the afternoon tea or the dancing, and sat at a distance from the other guests with her face mask and gloves on. Sine reassured Ada that there was no pressure to join in until she was ready.

Ada explained to Sine that she didn't get out much any more and needed to build up her strength and confidence walking again, so agreed to try the Walk and Talk activity.

She was matched with a volunteer, Sam, and they hit it off straight away. Ada gradually built up her stamina every week as she chatted with Sam during their walks.



Ada looked forward to seeing Sam, who offered her emotional support and encouragement, and she noticed her progress as she walked a little further each week. Ada also felt less nervous being out of the house and around people.



5 months after attending her first Let's Connect event, Ada returned for another dance. Sine noticed a big change - Ada removed her mask and gloves, sat at a table of 8 other guests to enjoy the refreshments and conversation, and then joined in with the dancing.

Ada told Sine how much she enjoyed herself and that when she danced "I can forget the pain for a little while". Ada was grateful to the team for hosting events like this and inviting her. She reported that her mental health had improved through the weekly walks with Sam, and that as she gained more strength and stamina she was also feeling more confident in herself.

Jane's story *

** The name has been changed to protect privacy*



Jane lives alone and enjoyed an independent lifestyle with support from her family until her dementia progressed to a point where they all felt some extra help was needed.

Karen, a Customer Care Officer with Age UK Sutton's **Help at Home** service, visited Jane and her son. Jane explained that going to the supermarket and maintaining independence was important to her, but she would like someone to help make her shopping list and accompany her, as she was becoming forgetful.



Carol, a new Support Worker through Age UK Sutton's 'Fast Track' recruitment partnership with the Job Centre Plus, was matched with Jane and visited her 4 times a week. They agreed that on Fridays they would go out and enjoy some activities together.

Carol and Jane talked about what Jane likes to do, and what she could no longer do on her own. They made a 'Bucket List' of activities such as walking to the park for an ice cream, feeding the ducks, singing along to music and having tea at a garden centre.



Jane told Carol about how she used to play the piano but hadn't for years as she couldn't afford to buy one, and didn't think she'd be able to read sheet music anymore.

Carol spoke to the local church, and agreed with Jane that they could go there on Fridays so she could play their piano.

Jane's eyes lit up when she visited but she was hesitant, so Carol reassured her and helped her to feel less overwhelmed. Then Jane started to play her favourite piece of music from memory.



Since that outing, Carol and Jane have gone for milkshakes, fed the ducks at the park, and celebrated Jane's 88th birthday with tea and cake.

Although Jane does not always remember what she has arranged to do with Carol each week, she greatly enjoys the Bucket List activities.

As well as empowering Jane to join in with social activities, Carol also provides practical support during the week so that Jane can go shopping and continue to enjoy life in her own home as she wants. Now when Jane's family visit, they are able to spend quality time with her. Jane is able to live independently with her dementia, and she and her family appreciate the person-centred care and support she receives.

Where we've been

Our impact in 2022 - 2023

Over 30,000 contacts were made to more than 4000 people (an increase of 16% from last year)

£1.5 million more went into local older people's pockets

481 lonely and isolated individuals were connected with their community through our **NEW** Let's Connect programme

67 people were offered a volunteer position with us

111 people living with dementia were provided with specialist 1-2-1 and peer support

Of our clients, **1 in 5** were aged 85+

A new 'debt first aid' service was launched in partnership with Citizens Advice Sutton - expert, accessible advice from our office

846 people engaged with our Social Prescribing service over 9 months of delivery

78 people were provided with specialist support to manage their mental health and wellbeing with our **NEW** Mental Health Peer Support service

We joined the Together for Sutton consortium with 6 other local charities

Our Help at Home social enterprise partnered with DWP to offer a 'fast track', seamless experience for people returning to work

Where we're going

Our commitments for 2023 - 2024

Grow our Community of Voices to ensure older people's views and ideas are centred in our planning, and develop ways of demonstrating our impact

Continue to challenge ageism and champion principles of an Age Friendly Sutton - supporting and challenging local partners to do the same

Develop relationships and collaboration across South West London as a key partner in the health and care system

Expand our Community Support service to provide information, advice and casework support through appointments and outreach

Embed mental health and wellbeing across services and develop specialist support for older people in Sutton

Develop our Help at Home social enterprise to meet local needs and generate vital income for the charity

Secure long term funding to continue and grow our Dementia Peer Support service

Diversify our volunteer team and continue to develop our volunteer programme to broaden our offer to the Sutton community

Reach deeper into communities across the borough of Sutton, ensuring our organisation is present and accessible to everyone who needs us

Get involved!

We couldn't do what we do
without people like you

Our impact is thanks to the amazing work
of our volunteers, our trustees, our staff,
our clients, our partners, our donors and
funders, and our community.

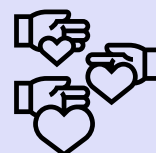
Ways for you to get involved:

Make a donation

Give your time

Fundraise for us

Help us spread the word



<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/sutton/get-involved/>

We rely on local people's support to help older Sutton residents

As an independent local charity, we are responsible for finding and raising our own funds. The income we receive from donations, grants and other funding stays in Sutton.

Donate by text

Text AUKSGIVE & your donation amount to
70450

Donate by cash or cheque

You can hand this in to our office or post it to
Age UK Sutton, Sutton Gate, 1 Carshalton Rd,
Sutton SM1 4LE

Leave a legacy

You can make a difference by leaving a gift to
Age UK Sutton in your Will


Donate your time as a volunteer

If you're interested in flexible volunteering opportunities, get in touch with us today!

volunteering@ageuksutton.org.uk

020 8078 0002

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/sutton/get-involved/>



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