

Advantage

Age Scotland's magazine: spring 25, issue 68



Take Five to Age Well

Small habits to boost your health this spring

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changes guide

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Age Scotland is the Scottish charity for older people. Our magazine, Advantage, provides information, inspiration and ideas to empower Scotland's older people and their friends, families and carers.

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If you have news, events or issues that you would like Advantage to cover, please get in touch. We also welcome ideas on how we might improve the magazine. To stop receiving Advantage, please get in touch with us via the details below.

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ISSN 1747-4515

Age Scotland, part of the Age Network, is an independent charity dedicated to improving the later lives of everyone on the ageing journey, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland. Registration Number: 153343
Charity Number SC010100. Registered Office: Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.

Welcome to Advantage magazine!

Spring is the season to embrace new activities, enjoy the outdoors and make the most of what's on offer in our communities.

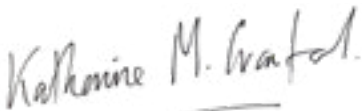
Looking ahead, it's never too early to start thinking about our 2025 Age Scotland awards which open for nominations soon. On p6 we have a profile of the Snowdrop Multiple Sclerosis Centre in Argyll, which received a highly commended award in last year's awards, and on p8 we share a sneak peek of what to expect from this year's event.

We do know that 2025 looks set to be a challenging year for many due to cost increases and funding cuts. It is important for us to understand the impact these changes are having on our member groups and we encourage those affected to speak to their local Age Scotland Community Development Officer so that we can do what we can to help raise awareness.

You can read about our latest health and wellbeing initiative, Take Five to Age Well, in partnership with the Open University, on p14. It's an opportunity to spring clean your wellbeing and embed a healthy habit into your routine.

For our readers with caring roles, we highlight the training and engagement workshops available for unpaid carers of people living with dementia on p16.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and as always, we welcome any feedback. We're always happy to share the great work going on across Scotland by and for older people.



Katherine Crawford, Chief Executive



Katherine Crawford, Chief Executive

Understanding the new devolved benefits

The benefits system in Scotland is changing rapidly. Understanding the new benefits can help you make sure you are claiming your entitlement.

As part of the transfer of certain responsibilities to the Scottish Parliament, Social Security Scotland has made many changes to improve the Scottish benefits system. This has included top-up payments to existing UK Government benefits and launching new benefits to replace some of those previously paid for by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The introduction of these new benefits is now well underway, with the majority already in various stages of rollout. Most recently, the pilot of Pension Age Disability Payment launched in autumn 2024, to replace Attendance Allowance. New claimants living in Argyll & Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney and Shetland can already apply for Pension Age Disability Payment with the payment being available Scotland-wide from 22 April 2025. The transfer of existing claimants will take place gradually over the coming months.

Other new benefits include Carer Support Payment, which replaces Carer's Allowance, and Adult Disability Payment, the new disability benefit replacing Personal Independence Payment for working-age adults. Those claiming Carer's Allowance are already being transferred to the new benefit, with the process due to be complete by spring 2025.

All new applications for a carer benefit should now be made to Social Security Scotland for Carer Support Payment. Working age adults making a new claim for a disability-related benefit should claim Adult Disability Payment.



If you would like to find out more, Age Scotland provides free benefits workshops and information guides on each of the benefits for older adults in Scotland. There is also a **Benefit and Pension Changes** guide outlining recent changes that are most likely to affect older people. All our guides are available to read or order at www.age.scot/information or call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.

For more advice on your own situation, our helpline advisers can help. A free benefit check can let you know which benefits you could apply for and how much you could claim. You can book a benefit check by calling our helpline. You can also check your entitlement online at www.age.scot/benefitscalculator.

Meet our member group: The Snowdrop Centre



The Snowdrop / Multiple Sclerosis Centre, Mid Argyll is situated in Lochgilphead on the west coast of Scotland, with outreach support extending over the larger areas of Mid Argyll, Kintyre, Islay and Jura.

The group's mission is to support people affected by neurological and other long-term conditions, as well as anyone feeling socially isolated. Here's Community development officer Jo Cowan's experience when she paid them a visit.

I felt the full friendly warmth of the Snowdrop Centre's welcome when I visited to present Laurene Cameron, the centre's wellbeing worker with her Age Scotland Awards' Highly Commended Certificate. Regulars and newcomers alike are extended cordial hospitality - a virtual fire on the screen added to the warm atmosphere.

It's easy to see why Laurene and the centre were nominated for the Services to Older People Award: the wide range of activities and services held in, and from, this comfortable, nurturing setting is impressive. Laurene leads physical activity sessions like Move It or Lose It and Giraffe Physio, having also offered seated/walking shinty and sports reminiscence sessions.

Claire Cameron, long term conditions outreach and community development worker, outlined the creative sessions - knitting, quilting and crochet, and the adult learning group that will give anything a go!

I join this group during their zen drawing activity, and chat about what coming here means to them. They speak of feeling supported living with long-term conditions, bereavement, and other challenges - and also of the benefits of companionship, trying new things, keeping active and having fun. All praise the enthusiastic, dedicated staff-team and volunteers.



(L) Laurene Cameron receives her certificate from Jo Cowan
 (R) Proud winners - Andrina MacKinnon, Laurene Cameron, Nora McArthur and Claire Cameron

Centre manager, Karen McCurry, champions the ‘Camerados’ movement, holding a weekly ‘public living room’ where anyone can drop in for a cuppa and a chat. Once a month, their Pie and Pint session (alcohol-free drinks) is open to all local men. Their food-share scheme operates every day: volunteers collect food from the local Co-op, then display it outside the centre for community members to help themselves. The centre even opened for 3 hours on Christmas Day, welcoming anyone who fancied doing something different.

Along with the people they support, within the centre, at home and in local communities, Snowdrop Centre staff continuously explore, and fundraise for, further ways to improve lives, health and wellbeing. Having embarked on a new series of therapeutic art classes- and with plans to take activities on the road to island/remote communities in a converted horse trailer - this Snowdrop continues to bloom!

Visit www.msargyll.com for more information on **The Snowdrop Centre** or search for **Multiple Sclerosis Centre Argyll** on Facebook.

Interested in finding out more about how our Community Development team can support your group? Email members@agescotland.org.uk.

Unveiling the Age Scotland Awards and Conference 2025

This year's Age Scotland awards are shaping up to be bigger and better than ever. We're delighted to announce that we will be hosting the awards and conference at Perth Concert Hall on Wednesday, October 8.

The return of the conference will be an exciting opportunity to welcome more members and invited guests from across the country. The venue has the advantage of being accessible for people based further north, while also being within easy reach of the south and the central belt.

The concert hall also offers more space, and we are thrilled that this will provide more than double the capacity than we've had in recent years, allowing us to welcome more members to the event.

On the day itself the awards and the conference will have equal billing, with a schedule packed with advice, information and opportunities to forge new connections. We will be celebrating our award winners, with presentations and videos of their incredible work which does so much to support and make life better for older people across the country.

Plans for this year's awards are still being finalised, but nominations will be opening in April. We look forward to receiving lots of inspiring applications and reading about the innovative and important work that is happening every day to benefit older people.

Last year's award winners and those who received highly commended prizes were excellent examples of that work. The Evanton Social and Events group, for example, who received a highly commended certificate in 2024, has been providing social activities for more than 40 years. Members celebrated their prize with lunch, a glass of fizz, while resident poet, Ella Maclennan, 97, wrote a poem to mark the occasion.



Top row: Audrey Whyte | A celebratory lunch for the Evanton social and events group
 Bottom row: scenes from the 2024 Awards ceremony

Audrey Whyte, the founder of Sounds Familiar, a singing group for people living with dementia, also received a highly commended award. Audrey began the group in Inverness ten years ago. More than 80 attendees joined a gathering to celebrate Audrey's achievement, enjoying a cake featuring the Age Scotland and Sounds Familiar logos.

Find out more about our awards, read about previous winners and submit a nomination for an outstanding group or individuals' contribution for their work with older people. Visit agescotland.org.uk, email awards@agescotland.org.uk or call **0333 323 2400**.

Support for older veterans in the prison system

For Brian Kelly leaving the British Army after ten years and building a life as a civilian proved challenging. He came back to Scotland with PTSD and an addiction to alcohol. He quickly found himself homeless. “I was lost,” he says. “I didn’t know what support was available.”

As Brian’s issues escalated, his family tried to persuade him to speak to Combat Stress, the mental health charity for veterans. He refused. He got into trouble with the police and ended up with what he describes as a ‘serious conviction’.

“I was in a deep hole. It was coming into the Covid period, and everything was shutting down. So, I did eventually contact Combat Stress. They put me in touch with SACRO and the support then started to kick in. SACRO, a Scottish community justice organisation, provide the service to veterans of all ages. I stopped drinking. I got therapy through Combat Stress. My sentencing kept being delayed because of Covid, and when I did appear in court the Sheriff was told about the progress I’d made, and he gave me a chance. I grabbed that chance with both hands.”

Now it’s Brian’s turn to give other ex-Armed Forces personnel a second chance. Brian is one of six mentors in SACRO’s Veterans Mentoring Service, founded ten years ago and run by former police officer, Gavin Phillips. Many of the ex-Armed Forces personnel supported by SACRO are over 50 and recently the service supported an 83 year old veteran released from prison.

Gavin, who has led the service for ten years, knows the main challenges that veterans face. “Support with housing, access to benefits and a military pension, alcohol addiction, social isolation – these are just some of the things many veterans might need support with,” he says.



Gavin (L) of SACRO with Brian, a veterans' mentor | Brian & Gavin work with veterans of all ages

As Brian knows, adjusting to life outside the military can be difficult, and in some ways being inside the prison system can feel like being back in the Armed Forces. “Being sent to prison means having a roof over your head, three meals a day and regimented days, for those who don’t know how to cope,” he says. “Of course, the vast majority of veterans go on to make positive contributions to society.” says Gavin. But it’s the small number who are at risk that SACRO wants to reach.

“It’s a constant challenge because although there are a lot of veterans’ charities, there are a lot of veterans who are not known to any services,” says Gavin.

For Brian, his brush with the criminal justice system has had a positive outcome and enables him to help others who find themselves in similar situations after they leave the military.

“We have got to keep sustaining the service,” says Gavin continues. “There is so much demand. But we know what we do works and that is why we want to carry on doing it.”

For more information, support and advice visit [age.scot/veterans](https://www.age.scot/veterans)
 Contact **SACRO** at www.sacro.org.uk/advice/contact-us
 or call **0131 624 7270**.

Campaigning to help pensioners stay warm this winter

The announcement from the Scottish Government that it plans to reinstate an energy support payment to all pensioners came as a huge relief, after months of uncertainty following the Chancellor's shock decision to scrap the universal Winter Fuel Payment.

Age Scotland actively campaigned against the widespread removal of the Winter Fuel Payment. We urged the Scottish Government to step in and support older people on low and moderate incomes when it became apparent the UK government was not prepared to reverse its disastrous decision.

Responsibility for the devolved version of Winter Fuel Payment – the Pension Age Winter Heating Payment – falls to the Scottish Government from this year, and we were keen to learn if ministers intended to deliver a universal payment.

So we warmly welcomed the Scottish Government's pledge to give a payment of £100 to all pensioners from winter 2025, with those on Pension Credit maintaining their £200 to £300 of support.

However, as we said at the time, we are concerned that for many pensioners on low and modest incomes, £100 will not be enough to lift them out of fuel poverty and could still leave them struggling to pay their energy bills.

With 4 in 10 pensioners living in fuel poverty in Scotland and a quarter in extreme fuel poverty, energy costs are one of the biggest challenges facing hundreds of thousands of older people. As energy bills continue to rise, many pensioners need support to adequately heat their homes and eat hot meals during the coldest months.



Staying warm at home is important for older people

Our free helpline received hundreds of calls last winter from those in desperate need, who were worried that they wouldn't be able to keep their homes warm and afford their heating bills. It became obvious that some older people were being forced to decide between staying warm at home and eating hot meals.

Many of the pensioners in the greatest need of support, due to low income or living in the coldest, hardest to heat homes, aren't eligible for Pension Credit. For them, £100 offers some help, but perhaps not enough to allow them to live comfortably next winter.

Bearing that in mind, we would urge the Scottish Government to keep looking at what more they can do to bridge the gap.

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To **share your view**, email us at **communications@agescotland.org.uk**. We would like to hear your experience of losing the Winter Fuel Payment and your thoughts on the Scottish Government's replacement proposals.



Small habits that could change your life!

This May, the nation is invited to make small changes for better ageing. Health and wellbeing manager, Doug Anthony, explains why Age Scotland is supporting the Take Five to Age Well initiative.

Have you ever made a New Years' resolution for health? Many have, but few stick to it past January - often because of overambitious goals. A surer way to succeed is with small daily changes that you can stick to, regardless of how you feel. Over time, these become habits you just do, without much or any effort.

That's the thinking behind Take Five to Age Well, which invites everyone to make a small change in their routines throughout the month of May. It offers a menu of daily actions in five areas which science shows are vital for healthy ageing - eating well, staying hydrated, moving more, connecting socially, and keeping your brain stimulated. The challenge first ran in 2023 with more than 3000 taking part across the UK. We've heard from some participants that it made a big difference to their lives.

Ageing isn't optional but we can influence its speed - with the right habits, research suggests we can add 14 years to our lives on average. There can be big barriers to ageing well, including caring responsibilities, long-term health conditions, and inequalities. Modern life is also full of unhealthy temptations and conveniences. Yet everyone has power to do something, and small changes can, over time, make a big difference. While a healthy long life



Take Five to Age Well is a partnership with the Open University

isn't guaranteed, things that boost our chance of enjoying it, such as hobbies and friendships, are very often fun, satisfying, and low cost or free.

If you use the internet, you can register to receive online support for a personal healthy ageing pledge. Age Scotland also invites groups of people interested in supporting each other to age well to form a Take Five to Age Well club. You might be involved in an existing community group, public service, intergenerational project, or workplace. Alternatively, you could be friends or neighbours who would like to set up a Take Five to Age Well club from scratch. We'll provide you with materials to explore healthy ageing together, with no need for the internet. You can support each other in selecting and achieving personal health pledges and/or choose a whole-group pledge.

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Take Part! To find out more visit **age.scot/takefive** or give us a call on **0333 323 2400** (ask for the Health and Wellbeing team).

Supporting Scotland's Unpaid Carers

In 2024, Age Scotland's Dementia Training team marked a significant milestone, securing funding from the National Lottery Community Fund.

This crucial support has enabled the team to expand its work, empowering unpaid carers of people living with dementia by equipping them with the tools, knowledge, and confidence needed to navigate their roles. This initiative is making a difference in the lives of countless carers across Scotland.

A key focus of this funding has been the continuation of Carers Workshops. These sessions, offered to individuals, community groups, and carer organisations, provide vital information about carers' rights and the support available to them. By delivering practical knowledge, these workshops help carers better advocate for themselves and those they care for.

Despite these efforts, many carers continue to report feelings of isolation and a lack of adequate support. Recognising these challenges, Age Scotland's Dementia Training team conducted a series of engagement sessions across Scotland to listen directly to carers' experiences.

The engagement sessions revealed recurring concerns, including:

- A lack of accessible, centralised information for carers.
- Inadequate post-diagnostic support.
- The absence of proactive assistance before crises emerge.

One carer shared, **"Our lives have been turned upside down, but who's looking after us?"**

These insights have been compiled into the Carer Engagement Report, a resource that highlights the barriers unpaid carers face and calls for systemic change.



Julie and Rachel deliver tailored workshops for carers

Using the report's findings, Age Scotland has written to members of the Scottish Parliament, urging them to address the longstanding gaps in support for unpaid carers. The letter outlines critical recommendations, including enhancing post-diagnostic support, improving social security provisions, and ensuring funds allocated under the Carers Act are used effectively.

Looking ahead, Age Scotland's Dementia Training team will use these insights to shape new, tailored workshops to meet carers' specific needs. By addressing the gaps identified, the team remains committed to ensuring carers' rights are upheld and their invaluable contributions recognised.

This work is a rally cry for policymakers and service providers to take decisive action, ensuring a more supportive and equitable future for Scotland's unpaid carers.

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Read our **Carer Engagement Report** and letter to MSPs at age.scot/carereengagement.

Interested in learning more about our dementia training sessions?

Please contact us at dementiatraining@agescotland.ac.uk.

Fun-packed week for the Big Braw Brew crew

“It’s really lovely to see so many people getting involved, learning about the different groups in the area, and having a good time!”

That was just one of the many enthusiastic responses from attendees at the launch of the Big Braw Brew week for over 50s in Helensburgh and Lomond last October.

Age Scotland Development Officer Charlie Murphy worked with local partners Ali Gildea from Grey Matters and Caryl McLean from the local Third Sector Interface on this week of special events, inspired by the Sunday Post’s Big Braw Community campaign to tackle loneliness. They ensured that each day of the week had a featured activity and that as much of the area as possible was covered with events hosted in Garelochhead, Arrochar and Cardross as well as in Helensburgh.

More than 120 older people attended the launch for the Big Braw Brew week at Helensburgh Parish Church Hall to find out more about activities in the area, as well as obtain important information on benefits and energy from the ten different organisations who staffed the various stalls.

Entertainment was provided by local Glennan Uke Group, with tea, coffee and cake from Grey Matters volunteers. Local MSP Jackie Baillie came along to launch the week, noting that she could hear the animated chatter from the minute she entered the building.

Most days of the Big Braw Brew week featured a local group, supplementing their usual activities with either a taster in Body Boosting Bingo or an energy and benefits advice drop-in, or a combination of both.



Musical entertainment provided by Glennan Uke group | Jackie Baillie MSP launched the event

On the Tuesday, Lochhead Station Trust held a special Halloween party to support the week. Events were advertised across local newspapers with four articles published before and during the week to raise awareness.

The four aims of the Big Braw Brew Week were to: promote and celebrate older people's groups and services for older people in the Helensburgh and Lomond area, target older people who might be more isolated so that they are more aware of what is available and feel warmly invited to attend, offer information and advice, provide an opportunity for older people's groups and services to connect with one another.

Feedback from participating groups and organisations indicated that the week was a big success. Elaine from Helensburgh and Lomond Carers said: "It was an absolute pleasure to be part of such meaningful and engaging activities". Others spoke of new members appearing at their meetings afterwards, due to their increased profile over the week.

Interested in taking part in the Big Braw Brew?

Please contact us at communications@agescotland.org.uk.

Could park home life be right for you?

Park home life can offer community spirit and an easily manageable home, but make sure you do your research, says Vicki Morrison, secretary of SCOPHRA (Scottish Confederation of Park Home Residents' Associations).

Many older people are looking to downsize and be part of a friendly community in a quieter area. That is what park homes can offer, but what exactly are they? SCOPHRA get asked a lot, so here are some basic facts.

Park homes are not traditional 'bricks and mortar' homes. When buying a park home, you are purchasing the property but leasing the land (called a 'pitch') from the site owner, who owns the land. This means the payment of a 'pitch fee' (normally monthly or quarterly) allows you to position your property on the site owner's land plus entitles you to any other services the site owner provides (for example, upkeep of the common areas, the roads, the street lighting, sewerage, water and maybe gas and electricity). Naturally, you get a reduction in your council tax to reflect this.

You enter into a contract with the site owner, who can be individuals, families, small or large companies. Ask your potential neighbours about the site owners, as they can vary from very good to very bad! Also, ensure that the site owner has a full residential site licence. Some site owners mis-sell holiday homes as being fully residential, but it is actually illegal to live in a holiday home as your permanent residence.

The main advantages about park homes for older people is that they are easy to maintain, are on a single level (so no stairs to worry about) and



Accessible park homes can suit some older people | A social gathering of park home residents

many sites have age restrictions, so you must be over a certain age to live permanently on the site (this is usually 50 and over). Younger folk can visit and stay for short periods, of course.

Additionally, many park home sites have residents' associations that build a community by organising social events, publishing newsletters and working to maintain good relationships with site owners, the local council and other relevant organisations, such as Age Scotland.

If you thoroughly research the site and are looking for a more peaceful lifestyle in a community of like-minded souls, park home living can be fantastic. But please do your research!

SCOPHRA has a network of Member Park Home Residents' Associations around Scotland that can support with advice, encouragement and news. They are also working very closely with the Scottish Government to effect changes in legislation that will benefit all those living in park homes in Scotland.

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Find out more: visit www.scophra.scot.

Creativity & Connection at the Scottish Dementia Arts Festival

The second Scottish Dementia Arts Festival, supported by Age Scotland and Luminare, took place in Edinburgh at the end of last year. The festival showcases the creative talents of people living with dementia and is designed to shift perceptions, dispel myths and celebrate the creativity of Scotland's dementia communities.

The festival was opened by Scottish Government minister Maree Todd, and the programme kicked off with music from dementia focused choir The Forget Me Notes, followed by a performance of 'yesteryear', a new dance theatre piece commissioned for the festival, exploring the experience of the dementia journey.

Across the 4-day programme there really was something for everyone to enjoy, from live music performed by seasoned jazz professionals Sophie Bancroft and Tom Lyne, to compassionate clowning workshops led by Magdalena Schamberger, reminding us of the joy in the playful side of life. Another highlight was the Weekday Wow Factor's daytime disco which had audiences up and dancing to everything from ABBA to Eminem!

The festival represents a shift towards a more inclusive understanding of people with dementia. This was captured in the inspiring play, Caught In This Moment of Time, directed by Francesca Taylor Coleman and showing how her father Ron Coleman uses the technology of Alexa to retain autonomy at home. Later in the week, the experiences of members of STAND Dementia Meeting Centres in Fife were shared in songs they had written with musical collaborators Gus Harrower and Robyn Smith, and there was plenty of singing along.



Top L: Arthurs Seat by Willy Gilder | Bottom: hangings commissioned by Dolphin Arts Project in Ullapool, in collaboration with artist Anne Marie Quinn | STAND Fife members

A particularly memorable morning saw residents and staff from local care homes attend a performance of *McScrooge* by the Citadel Arts Group, followed by an intergenerational singing workshop with children from an Aberdeen primary school who had travelled to join the event. The intergenerational spirit was uplifting as young and older people came together to share theatre, laughter, song, storytelling, dance and puppetry.

Creative director of Deepness Dementia Media, Dawn Irvine, said: “I was immensely proud of what we achieved and of everyone involved. The artists, activists, care partners and educators all living with dementia are living testaments to the fact that creativity, passion, and vision don’t have to be diminished by a diagnosis.”

The Dementia Arts Festival returns in September 2025 in Stirling.

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Learn more: visit www.deepnessdementiaarts.co.uk.

Friendship calls help tackle loneliness



At the end of last year, Age Scotland published new figures on loneliness among older people at Christmas. The research revealed a bleak picture, with 150,000 older people in Scotland saying they would eat Christmas dinner alone and 618,000 just hoping for a phone call on Christmas Day.

Tackling loneliness and isolation among older people is a core focus of our work at Age Scotland. At the heart of delivering support to older people experiencing loneliness is our friendship service.

Since its inception in 2020, at the height of the first Covid lockdown, the Age Scotland Friendship Line has been making weekly calls to older people in need of companionship. Feedback has been extremely positive, with 98% of older people saying they feel happier or more content using the service and 94% saying they feel less lonely.

“It’s someone to talk to, when you live alone and don’t see people and don’t talk to anyone for a whole day,” said one service user. Another described it as “a lifeline”.

Bryan Greenock, a volunteer who works on the Friendship Line, explains why he got involved. “I found the concept of the service intriguing and extremely worthwhile. The value provided by the service is so critical to users and their families, that I really wanted to play my part in supporting it,” he says.



“The value provided by the service is so critical to users and their families, that I really wanted to play my part in supporting it”

Bryan Greenock, Volunteer

“The call recipients you talk to generally change each week, but after a while, you get the opportunity to talk to someone you’ve spoken to before. It really brought a smile to my face the first time I was remembered, and we picked up our conversation where we’d left it previously! I could then hear what it meant to them that I had remembered them, their interests, and what we’d spoken about on previous calls.”

Bryan believes the key to being a great Friendship volunteer is “a genuine, healthy and gentle curiosity” as well as the ability to “actively listen”.

He would encourage anyone interested to give it a go. “Get involved and try it!” he says. “As a volunteer it is a relatively straightforward service to deliver, but one that makes a direct and significant impact to the people that live in our communities. I recognise that it is a privilege to have the opportunity to make such a positive difference to someone”.

Interested in getting involved?

Our wonderful volunteers play a vital role at Age Scotland. From volunteering on our Friendship Line and helping with fundraising, to supporting with research and admin, we have a number of exciting volunteering opportunities where you can truly make a difference.

Visit age.scot/volunteer to find out more.

Sharing the diversity and inclusion message across the country

It has been a busy few months for the Diversity and Inclusion team as we seek to build and strengthen relationships, extend our influencing reach and embed equality for older people in everything we do, writes Fran Reid.

As a relatively new team at Age Scotland, we've enjoyed getting out and about to different parts of the country, sharing our message and establishing contacts with marginalised communities.

A key highlight was a reception at the Scottish parliament to showcase our work to politicians, partner organisations and individuals involved in equality work at grassroots level across the country.

Influencing politicians, at a local and national level, is important. As well as the reception, members of the Scottish Ethnic Minority Older People's Forum and the Scottish LGBTQ+ Older People's Network have participated in Scottish government consultations including dementia awareness, housing, the National Care Service and the Assisted Dying bill. Our role is to ensure that older people from underrepresented backgrounds can have their say and that their needs are considered when planning new service delivery.

New partnerships also allow us to support organisations in removing barriers to accessibility. In the past few months, we've partnered with the Royal Botanic Garden, Historic Environment Scotland and Sky Cares.

After a visit to the Botanic Garden, one participant said: "Days like this keep isolation at bay".



The Holyrood reception was a highlight last year | Pride celebrations took place around the country

We also have projects like Bollywood Screen Memories, which was featured in STV news, and showcased the power of nostalgic Bollywood films and music to help enhance memory and support those living with dementia. Appearing on television gave the project an added boost, with one participant saying: “It’s great when we can visibly see the difference we can make. The coverage on the news is just one example of that.”

And finally, engaging with wider ethnic minority and marginalised communities has been a big part of our work. We organised an African Diaspora event to engage with African older people in Scotland. Age Scotland also attended Pride events across Scotland to engage with people from Kirkcaldy, Edinburgh and a very sunny Oban!

Events like these are great ways to connect with local communities and promote Age Scotland’s work to new audiences. They also amplify the voices of older people from ethnic minority and LGBTQ+ communities – and are great fun for those who get to attend!

Interested in finding out more?

Get in touch with Rohini at rohini.sharmajoshi@agescotland.org.uk.

Age Scotland hops aboard as Lothian's new charity partner

We were delighted to announce that Age Scotland was chosen as Lothian's 'Charity of Choice' for 2025/2026 after a vote by more than 2,500 members of staff.

The two-year partnership was secured after charity representatives visited Lothian's bus depots and travel shops across Edinburgh, sharing examples of just some of the wide range of work Age Scotland does to support older people with advice, information, campaigns and friendship.

The partnership will provide Age Scotland with an invaluable opportunity to raise awareness about its work throughout Lothian, including how we can help. If you're in the region, look out for a brand-new Lothian bus wrapped in Age Scotland branding!

Lothian, recently named Bus Operator of the Year at the national transport awards, are a key part of the Edinburgh and the Lothians transport network, running 700 buses a day and carrying 115 million passengers annually.

Funds raised through this partnership will contribute to Age Scotland's community development work in the Edinburgh and Lothians area where our Community Development Officer, Calum Strang, assists more than 60 older people member groups.

Gaynor Marshall, communications director for Lothian, said: "We're delighted to welcome Age Scotland as Lothian's Charity of Choice 2025-26. Lothian is proud to be a part of the communities we serve, and we look forward to working with the team at Age Scotland over the course of the



Age Scotland is delighted to partner with Lothian in support of older people

next two years to raise awareness of the support they can offer - helping to tackle loneliness, support inclusion and deliver better lives for older people across our operating area.”

Stacey Kitzinger, Age Scotland’s Associate Director of Fundraising and Marketing welcomed the new partnership, adding: “I’ve met many Lothian employees on our visits to depots and heard of how they resonate with our work through either being over 50 themselves, a former veteran or supporting a family member.

“What’s great about this partnership is there is so much mutual benefit. Age Scotland can support Lothian’s employees while they support us in raising much-needed funds to run our services. A bonus is the brilliant exposure from both a wrapped bus, and digital screens onboard. This will raise the profile of what we do so that any older person travelling on a Lothian bus feeling lonely or struggling, knows where to turn to for support.”

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Learn more about our corporate partners at **age.scot/getinvolved**.

Help us

to help

older people

who are alone



Thousands of older people in Scotland live in isolation. Many go days or even weeks without speaking to anyone. For these people, Age Scotland can be a lifeline.

Our dedicated friendship line supports hundreds of lonely and isolated older people who receive a weekly friendship call. We chat about lots of different things, providing companionship and a friendly ear.

Those who receive a friendship call tell us how much it means to them. They describe it as a highlight of their week and comment on how much they look forward to their weekly chat.

Together, we can be there for those older people who need us most. With donations and gifts in wills from kind-hearted people like you, we can continue our fight to support older people, end loneliness, and be there for people who have no one else to turn to in later life.

With your support we can answer every call for help. Just £5 enables us to provide a friendship call to a lonely older person, giving them someone to chat to and brightening up their week.

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Visit www.age.scot/donatedtoday to donate or find out more about leaving a gift in your will. You can also call **03330 15 14 60** or complete the form opposite and send it to us at FREEPOST RSBS-KEHC-GBBC, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.

Can you support our work?

Your donation could make a real difference to the lives of older people in Scotland.

Title Initials Surname

Address:

..... Postcode:

By providing us with your telephone number and email address you are consenting to us contacting you via phone, text and email: Phone
Email

I would like to make a donation of: £10 £20 £50 or £

by **Cheque** (made payable to: Age Scotland)

Card payment (MasterCard Visa CAF CharityCard)

Card number: / / /

Security code: Valid from: / Expiry date: /

I would like to make my donation worth 25% more

giftaid it

Yes, I want Age Scotland* and its partner charities to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

No, I am not a UK taxpayer, and/or I do not wish to Gift Aid my donations.

Date:

Keeping in touch with you

We* would like to keep in touch with you and provide you with updates on our work and how you can support us. We will never sell your data and we promise to keep your details safe and secure. You can change your mind at any time by phoning 0333 32 32 400 or writing to us. For further details on how your data is used and stored visit www.agescotland.org.uk

I do not wish to receive communications by post

*Age Scotland is part of the Age Network, which includes its charitable and trading subsidiaries and national partners (Age UK, Age Cymru and Age NI). Age Scotland is an independent charity dedicated to improving the lives of older people in Scotland, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland. Reg No: 153343 Charity No: SC010100. Registered Office: Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.

A Gift for Generations



Imagine a Scotland where older people feel connected, supported, and valued.

A gift in your Will helps us support older people in Scotland for generations to come.

🖱 www.age.scot/legacies

☎ 0333 323 2400

@ legacies@agescotland.org.uk

 **age**Scotland