

## **Welcome to our charitable services update**

The 2020-21 financial year covered in this update is the most challenging year any organisation providing care and services for older people has had to face, and Friends of the Elderly has been no exception.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, we have done all that we can to support and protect our clients, residents, service users and staff. I am immensely proud and humbled by the dedication of all our staff during this period. Despite the day-to-day pressures of providing our services in these difficult times, we have adapted our services to meet changing demands.

Throughout the pandemic, we have seen an exceptional demand for our grant services. We believe that this increase highlights how threadbare the existing lifeline is for people who are desperately holding on. In response, we stepped up our grant giving by broadening the eligibility criteria of our grants programme and increasing the sums of money awarded. Alongside this, we have added a new Essential Living Cost category to help with food, medicines, delivery charges and anything else that becomes unmanageable as a result of the pandemic.

With the closing of our homes to all but essential visitors even before the government mandated it, it was vital that we provided extra support and activities for care home residents missing their loved ones. One such initiative was our dedicated inbox and accompanying hashtag (#MessageofSupport), which were flooded with kind words, poems, drawings and video messages. These messages of support offered a little joy and comfort to the older people in our care.

Despite the challenges of the last year, we managed to significantly increase the number of volunteering hours we delivered – through the provision of services including telephone calls to check in and practical assistance like picking up shopping. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers for their support and dedication. Their passion and commitment have been an inspiration to us all.

I am grateful for the continued dedication, fortitude and patience shown this year from everyone involved with the charity. This includes our care home residents, homecare and day care service users, and their families, our grant recipients and other clients, who are at the heart of our services, and who make my role worthwhile. Thank you to all our staff, our board of trustees, and the trusts, businesses and individuals who have supported us financially. We look forward to a future where we can build on the lessons and innovations of the past year.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Allen  
Chief Executive

[www.fote.org.uk](http://www.fote.org.uk)

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We have been supporting people for over 100 years. Back then, we were providing 'Penny Dinners' to help older men returning from the First World War in 1918. Now, we are making sure older people can live independent and fulfilled lives through a range of charitable services.

The pandemic disrupted the lives of many of the older people we support but we are proud of how swiftly our vital services responded and adapted. Through our low-income grants, befriending and not-for-profit caring services, we were there for hundreds of older people when they needed it most.

As a charity, all surplus income from our paid-for services is reinvested into our charitable activities. We also rely on the generosity of our supporters to continue our vital work. Thank you for helping to make a real difference to the lives of older people.



*One of our care home residents having cuddles with Slippers the cat who has had an incredible impact on residents who are living with dementia.*

## The gift of independence



Dennis\*, 66, was struggling to make ends meet whilst trying to get back into work, so our grants service paid for his HGV test. Dennis told us:

*"I'm not 25 anymore but I'm not ready to put my feet up. The test is £313 and when I wasn't working, I couldn't find that – I had even got into arrears on my rent, having to pay it in bits. I was struggling. I'm happy because now I am working, I have been able to stop all my benefits. Being older, you are more alone. It's best to get out there and do things. I'm not the same when I'm not moving, not doing anything. I believe you've got to grab life while you can - it's about self-preservation."*

## Our impact

**2.1 million pensioners live in poverty, the largest number in 15 years.<sup>i</sup>**

**587** older people were helped with £195,848 one-off grants and regular allowances.

Grants given included:

- **£126,545** for home essentials like ovens, washing machines, mobility adaptations and IT equipment including laptops, mobile phones and tablets.
- **£30,516** for support with things like funeral costs and heating bills.
- **£3,887** for basic everyday items such as clothing and toiletries.

**Every donation we receive towards our grants service, up to £100,000, is doubled thanks to The Edward Gostling Foundation.**

**1.2 million people aged 65 and over experience chronic loneliness.<sup>ii</sup>**

**69** older people found friendship through our befriending service.

**54** amazing volunteers gave an average of 110 hours per week to support older people.

**4** new log cabins meant older people living in our care homes could get together with friends and family while being Covid safe.

**97** day care clients who are living with dementia or have some form of cognitive impairment received a regular delivery of personalised activity packs during self-isolation.

## Providing relief and comfort

Catherine\*, 67, lives on her own and suffers with osteoporosis and cellulitis, making it difficult for her to walk and uncomfortable to sit in a chair. We gave Catherine a grant of £400 for a riser recliner chair. She told us:

*"I was so pleased. I wouldn't have been able to have it now if it wasn't for the help. It's been wonderful. I've got such bad legs. If I'm sitting on a normal chair, I'm wriggling to the edge of the chair to get off it, I struggle to get up, and I have to be careful I don't fall off! This chair helps me get up out of it, and it reclines back so I can put my legs up. It's such a relief to have them up, especially when they get sore."*



## Finances

Our day-to-day operations were heavily impacted by Covid-19, resulting in lower rates of admission, increased costs of Personal Protective Equipment and additional staff costs. We recorded an operating loss of £1.4m, despite financial support from the government. The overall loss recorded was £1.9m, but this included a one-off impairment charge.

Care home occupancy and enquiries started to recover from April 2021 and day centres have been able to reopen. We reached an agreement with the Charity Commission to

access an endowed fund of up to £3m to support care home operations and we expect to close the gap in our operating losses over the next 24 months.

Our fundraised income was £700,000, which is more representative of our size and our resources than our overall consolidated income. We have ambitious plans to increase the number of older people we can reach with grants and to continue enriching the lives of the people we support. This is only achievable with support from our funders.

## Patrons and trustees

### Royal Patron

Her Majesty The Queen

We have been fortunate to enjoy the patronage of The Queen since 1953. Through receptions at the palace, meeting the older people we work with, and supporting fundraising appeals, Her Majesty has helped us support thousands of people throughout the decades of her reign.

### President

HRH Princess Alexandra, the Hon. Lady Ogilvy

### Vice Presidents

Robin Aisher OBE  
Roderic Bullough  
Joan Orford

### Patrons

The Rt Hon Baroness Boothroyd OM PC  
Dame Diana Farnham DCVO  
Baroness Sally Greengross OBE

### Honorary Physician

Dr Trevor Hudson

### Honorary Chaplain

The Reverend Prebendary Charles Marnham

### Board of trustees

Our trustees are unpaid volunteers who are ultimately responsible for the governance, leadership and financial viability of the charity. They set the strategic direction to enable us to work towards achieving our vision.

### Chair

Kerry Rubie

### Vice Chair

Jeremy Withers Green (until 4.12.20)

### Trustees

Joannie Andrews  
Martin Beecroft  
Sonia Campbell  
Rob Chapman  
Emily DeAbaitua  
David Deacon  
Paul Foster  
Rikki Garcia  
Louisa Hogarty  
Chris Maidment  
Jonathan Passman  
Sharon Prosser



# Thank you to our supporters



Our sincere thanks to all the donors who support us. We rely on the generosity of charitable trusts and foundations, companies, community groups and individuals to continue our vital work. It is impossible to name everyone, but a special thank you to:

Anthony and Deirdre Montagu Charitable Trust  
Baron Davenport's Charity  
Blakemore Foundation  
C Supplies  
Casa Stella  
Charles S.French Charitable Trust  
Community Foundation for Surrey  
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The Ron and Lyn Peet Trust  
The Slater Foundation  
The Tula Trust Limited  
The Walter Guinness Charitable Trust  
The White Oak Charitable Trust  
Thomas Roberts Trust  
Vitol

Some names have been changed to protect identity. Thank you to everyone who shared their story with us.

i <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2021/age-uk-responds-to-new-government-pensioner-poverty-figures/>

ii Michael Marmot et al. (2016), *English Longitudinal Study of Ageing: Waves 0-7, 1998-2015*. Figures extrapolated by Age UK to national population. Individuals experiencing 'chronic loneliness' are those who are often/always lonely for at least two of the last three years and at least sometimes lonely in the remaining year.

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