



How we made a difference

Charitable services update 2022-2023

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Helping people live well in later life



Welcome

to our annual update

I am pleased that during the 2022-23 financial year we saw a gradual move towards a post-pandemic world, although its impact on the people we support will continue to be felt for some time.

At the heart of Friends of the Elderly are people: those who receive our grants, live in our care homes, visit our day care services - and their families and friends. Providing dedicated support to all our beneficiaries are our staff, trustees, and patrons, who consistently demonstrate commitment to our cause and enhance the quality of life for older people. I extend my gratitude to them, as well as to all our supporters, for their invaluable contributions that enable us to carry out our crucial work.

I would also like to thank our President, Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra, The Hon. Lady Ogilvy for her continued support of Friends of the Elderly.

I hope you enjoy reading about the difference we make to the lives of older people.

Steve Allen
Chief Executive

Friends of the Elderly is a charity that runs care homes and day care services. Our Grants Programme supports older people who are experiencing financial hardship by providing them with the essentials needed to live with dignity.

We have been supporting people for over 100 years. From serving "Penny Dinners" to WWI veterans, to championing innovations in dementia care, supporting older people is still at the heart of what we do.



Our vision:

**A society where
all older people have the
opportunity to live fulfilled lives**



Our mission:

**To deliver services personalised
to individual needs and
integrated with local communities**

Our year in numbers



10%

increase in the number of older people applying for grants



1070

grants and regular allowances worth £260,000 given to older people experiencing financial hardship

These included:



158 grants for home repairs, flooring, beds and furniture



78 Essential Living Cost grants helped with basic items such as clothing and food



62 broken ovens were repaired or replaced



14 people were given money towards funeral costs so they could give a meaningful goodbye to a loved one



95 grants covered utility bills and emergency fuel costs



48 new washing machines for clean clothing and bedding



21 disability grants helped increase independence providing freedom for those with mobility issues



374

people and their carers were supported by day care services



290

residents on average were cared for in our care homes



23

members of staff were trained as Dementia Champions taking the total number to 66



16

Activity Co-ordinators organised a wide variety of daily activities

“ During 2022-2023 the number of older people applying for our grants increased by 10%. All expressed their individual worries, anxieties and fears about how they were going to keep warm, eat and feel secure through the winter months. In some cases we were, quite literally, their last hope; there was nowhere else for them to go. ”

Mark Wilson, Chief Operating Officer, Friends of the Elderly

Adapting to changing needs

**100
YEARS+**

For over 100 years, our Grants Programme has supported older people living in poverty.

Our grants enable vulnerable pensioners to replace broken white goods, make essential home repairs, cover unexpected expenses and afford disability adaptations and mobility aids – they even help with funeral costs.

Many of the older people we support have complex medical and/or mobility issues. Others live alone or are experiencing loneliness. If their boiler breaks down, they can't afford a few hundred pounds for repairs and for many of our grant recipients, the cost-of-living crisis has made an already difficult situation feel desperate.

Our Essential Living Costs grant stream was created in response to the rise in demand for help with simple basic everyday essentials like food, medicine and transport

to and from medical appointments. Grants for home essentials such as flooring and insulation kept people warm in colder months, and our Financial Support grants meant people were less worried about money during very challenging times.

We introduced new systems that helped streamline the grant application process and developed new methods for gathering and monitoring information. This data provides us with thorough and continuous feedback about the impact of our grants, enabling us to be responsive to changing and emerging needs.

We know our grants result in older people feeling healthier, happier, and more positive about the future, and we are reaching the people who need us the most; people like Pat, who was isolated and struggling to cope.

THANK YOU

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone at Devonshires Solicitors for raising a whopping £88,475 between April 2016 and September 2022.

Staff members jumped out of planes, tackled triathlons, and baked cakes to raise funds, as well as volunteering at our care homes and day care services.



Pat's story

Pat*, 85, recently lost her beloved husband and was struggling to cope. *"It had been really hard, losing my husband. I've always tried to get on and help myself – I've worked most of my life – but I felt desperate."*

"The cooker kept coming on and going off. I was worried it was going to blow up. I sat crying the other day. I am very frugal – I'll sit with a blanket over me, and I've got my hot water bottle, but you have got to put the heating on for a bit to keep warm."

The grant Pat received from Friends of the Elderly helped pay for repairs to her cooker, and some new winter clothes.

"I felt at peace. I was so overcome – I wept. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have done for me."

THANK YOU

We would like to express our sincere thanks to The Edward Gostling Foundation, which extended its support for a further ten years with an incredibly generous and impactful grant of £1 million.

"We are confident our funding is being put to the best possible use in helping vulnerable elderly people."

The Edward Gostling Foundation

*name has been changed.

Achieving better outcomes for all

“Whenever I go to see my brother the staff are always on hand and take time to chat with every resident. Not only are they there for residents, but their caring extends to the families of the residents too. My brother is very settled and much loved by all the staff who show endless patience and understanding to us all whenever we visit. I couldn't wish for my brother to be in a better care home - I would recommend it to anyone.”

The sister of a resident living in a Friends of the Elderly care home, Malvern



Caring and compassionate care

We overcame challenges throughout the year, increasing the number of residents in our homes and managing the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, while continuing to provide services personalised to individual needs.

Our residents and clients enjoyed a variety of engaging activities including summer concerts, basket weaving, cooking classes, pet therapy, and trips to the seaside.

As Covid-19 restrictions for care services started to relax, we welcomed back local community groups. The Cub Scouts visiting the Retired Nurses National Home in

Bournemouth was one such highlight. They had been regular visitors in 2019 and were able to return to the home in the summer of 2022.

Registered Manager, Alan Johnston, said:

“It was a delight to welcome them back. They spent an evening in the garden with residents toasting marshmallows, playing games and singing campfire songs. In September they worked alongside residents to improve the Forget-Me-Not Garden, Rose Garden and raised flower bed area.”

THANK YOU

We would like to extend our thanks to The Band Trust for their very generous support of the wet room refurbishment project at our Bernard Sunley care home in Surrey, and for their continuing support of our Grants Programme.



Excellence in dementia care

As the age of the UK's population increases, new health challenges are becoming more apparent – one is the increasing number of people living with dementia. At Friends of the Elderly, we want to provide the highest level of dementia care. To help us to do this, we developed our Dementia Education Programme, in partnership with Worcester University's highly regarded Association for Dementia Studies. We now have 66 trained Dementia Champions throughout the Charity and a further 30 senior staff have completed our Dementia Leadership Programme.

The Dementia Education Programme is firmly embedded throughout Friends of the Elderly, with staff from the senior leadership team through to front-line carers receiving this innovative, person-centred dementia training. The programme enhances the quality of life for people living with dementia in our care homes and day care services.

Our Dementia Champions are passionate about supporting residents living with dementia to maintain their independence as much as possible, and we are delighted that the programme was runner-up in the Dementia Care Team of the Year category at the national Caring UK Awards in December 2022.

Staff spotlight

We spoke to Monika Ahmed, Activities Co-ordinator at our Bernard Sunley care home in Woking, about being a Dementia Champion.



Can you describe the dementia training?

The training was interactive and informative and explained how to deliver person-centred care. It helped me to understand our residents' behaviours better and empowered me to be more confident about caring for people living with dementia. Part of our training involved making new plans to improve how we support our residents. In our care home we create memory scrapbooks with each resident, which include pictures of activities the resident enjoyed in the past, places they have been, their occupation, as well as family photos and special memories.

What difference does it make?

Being a Dementia Champion – first and foremost – is about using my knowledge and skills to promote positive changes for people living with dementia in our care homes. I have a duty to lead my colleagues by example and be a role model for others. Another important aspect is being an advocate for our residents, so they are heard; their needs and wishes are addressed; and to promote their social, physical, and emotional wellbeing.

What do you love about your role?

I am passionate about providing stimulating, person-centred care for our residents and meeting their emotional, physical, social, spiritual, and intellectual needs. Friends of the Elderly takes good care of people and I feel so proud to work here.

Financial summary

Our financial performance continued to be impacted by Covid-19. This was our third year of operating deficits caused by the pandemic and our first year without any additional government funding. We recorded a deficit in the year of £1.7m, of which £873,000 relates to investment market losses from the turbulent economy (compared to £1.0m gains the year before) but most of our investments are held for the long-term. The operating deficit resulted from lower numbers of care home residents, although this improved as the year progressed, likely following Covid restrictions lifting and confidence in the care sector returning. We have a strategic plan in place to recover our trading position to make a surplus and increase our grant-making.

Like most of the care sector, we started the financial year with high staff vacancies and reliance on higher-cost agency staff, but this also improved as the year progressed, with good recruitment, meaning that care staff vacancies fell from a Covid-related peak

by 47%. As our finances continue to recover, access to an endowed fund, approved by the Charity Commission, supports our operations. Fundraising supports our Grants Programme and enhancements to our care homes and day services.

Donations, including legacies, and the value of pro bono services received totalled £2.0m in the year. This includes two large one-off donations: £1.0m from The Edward Gostling Foundation for grant-making over the next ten years, and £250,000 from The Band Trust towards wet room refurbishment at The Bernard Sunley care home.

Our Winter Warmth Appeal raised £21,868, which meant we could help even more vulnerable older people struggling to heat their homes during the coldest months. As well as the support of individuals, companies, community groups and businesses, we also benefitted from fundraising events and activities throughout the year.

THANK YOU

We rely on the generosity of our donors to continue running our vital services for older people. Our sincere thanks to you all.



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