



Search Newcastle

Supporting older people in Newcastle

ANNUAL REVIEW 2022 - 2023



Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Review of Search's work in the year April 2022 to March 2023. It has been one of our busiest years yet at Search, I have been immensely proud of how our staff team have coped with the extra demand for our services and the extra complexity we see when referrals for support come through to us.

We have been able to extend our Advice and Information service to the Kenton and Fawdon areas of the city, and to help people with Energy Advice. We have been involved in APPG research "Preventing the need for Foodbanks" by sharing some of the hard-hitting facts that we see on daily basis and attend the House of Commons for the launch of the APPG report to raise these issues directly with MPs.

Our Activities Team continue to listen to the people who use our groups and develop new groups around their needs. We have started working more closely with tenants of High-Rise Flats and Tower Blocks on our ageing better project to support them in developing more social opportunities and fun activities. Our work with Vita Health to improve access for people aged 50+ to talking therapies has enabled us to employ a Community Link Worker who is working with organisations city wide to reach more people.

We have added a Dementia Engagement Worker to our team, this has enabled us to support more people living with Dementia and their carers as well as expand our range of Dementia Friendly Activities. We hosted a Conference this year "Dementia Navigating the Maze" providing an opportunity for people living with Dementia and their Carers to shape the Dementia Strategy for the city. This coming year will see a further conference where we will take the draft strategy out for consultation.

The year ahead will continue to challenge as we try to secure the funding we need to keep Search in a position to meet the challenges that come our way at a time of rising costs, but we have some really generous funders and supporters who make it all possible.

Chief Officer
Simon Luddington



Volunteering

Volunteering is essential to the overall running of Search, we continue to value and invest in volunteering. Search's "Our Approach" training session has been designed to provide volunteers with the skills and understanding to implement the ethos and policies of the organisation. This year we held a volunteer recruitment fair in Newcastle's city centre to increase our volunteer pool. To ensure that our volunteers continue to feel a valued part of the organisation we have introduced a volunteers newsletter, to increase communication in between our volunteer meetings and celebrations.

At Search we like to recognise the contribution our Volunteers make to the running of our organisation.

This year we had the opportunity to recommend Linda our much-valued Volunteer and Trustee for a Platinum Jubilee Award for her volunteering, Linda's contribution was recognised and celebrated by the Royal Voluntary Service and she received one of only 490 pin badges awarded to outstanding volunteers in country for the Queens' Platinum Jubilee.



Sylvie our Volunteer who runs our weekly knitting group clocked up 20 years of volunteering with Search, Sylvie is not only our longest serving volunteer, but she has been at Search longer than any of our staff team. To recognise her long service we surprised Sylvie with a floral bouquet.



Community Activities

Ageing Better

Ageing Better is Search's new project funded by the national Lottery working into age designated high rise and tower block flats to improve post Covid legacy of isolation and reduced mobility that these tenants are experiencing. Bringing back to life community rooms and building peoples confidence to access the wider community.

Inner West

We celebrated the Jubilee parties at our groups, we choreographed a special dance at Dance through the decades to mark the occasion. Then we welcomed Spring with the Semitones concert, where people were encouraged to take part using percussion instruments.

To address lower levels of mobility due to lack of exercise in recent lockdowns we have offered a diverse range of physical activities including gentle seated exercise, seated dance and more energetic Dance through the Decades saw attendees really building on their technique and fitness levels. We partnered with Elswick pool to offer Search swimmers, aqua aerobics classes and ladies-only aerobics class.

Our Blakelaw group soaked up the history in a guided tours of the Victoria tunnel, Tyne theatre and opera house. We partnered with the Alphabetti theatre, attending a thought-provoking workshop before enjoying the show "A whale of a time."

Cruddas Park hub provides advice and information, a range of activities such as the Search Sings Choir and mental wellbeing support. In October we celebrated international day of older people with a vintage themed tea party with a singer, food, local history displays and an old school pick and mix stall. Christmas was celebrated with creative crafts, card making, parties, a concert, tea dance, singing groups and a carol service.



Outer West

The Outer West has had a busy year providing enriching activities to Search Friends. We have strived to offer a diverse mixture of groups such as Yoga, line dancing, walking, Tai Chi, Strictly Ballroom, Gentle Seated Exercise, Knit and natter, Men's Group and Search Rocks (a group who listens to music, chats and has a cuppa). Our reason for doing this is to have an big an impact on the older people in the Outer West as possible. The groups offered bring people together who share a common interest in the hopes that friendships flourish to combat social isolation.

Case Study

D attends the Men's group regularly as well as several other Search groups he has been signposted to, including the Walking group and Search rocks.

Watching D grow more confident and social has been a pleasure for a couple of the Search team who have interactions with him. He is making a solid peer group which spreads between a couple of groups that Search put on.

He is loving activities that involve competition as well as getting stuck in with the cooking and other activities we enjoy at the Men's group.



Trips

This year we brought back our Summer Trips. For many people who use Search the trips are the only time they leave the west end, so we feel that this is an important part of our offer. This year we ran coach trips to Saltburn, Durham, Holy Island and Preston Park, every trip was full and we saw so many happy faces and received such positive feedback, we hope we can continue to offer this again in the summer of 2023

Our Bishops Court Lunch Club enjoyed a trip to Beefeater on Whitley Bay Sea Front, 3 mini buses offered door to door transport because of the reduced mobility of the group, after their meal they enjoyed some sunshine on the promenade, for some it had been many years since they had seen the sea, so they shared their memories on the bus journey home.

We had a trip to Beamish which was aimed at people living with Dementia and their carers, 3 mini buses provided door to door transport. A Music and Melody Session was held in the 1950's Town Hall followed by a traditional afternoon tea provided by our partners Cornerstone.

Dementia

Dementia Engagement

Thanks to funding from Ringtons and the ICB (Integrated Care Board) Search were able to employ a Dementia Engagement Worker who has worked closely with the local community over the past year to develop support for those living with dementia or memory concerns to live well and access the support they need. Our Dementia Engagement Worker has supported 140 individuals including carers across the year, indicating the high demand for more community support.

We have developed and implemented various dementia friendly groups in the West End of Newcastle, Singing for your Brain groups, monthly Memory Cafes and a weekly Memory tea to spread awareness and support opportunities. The sessions are focused on fun and reminiscence and allows those that attend to build friendships and a support network. Sessions have included musical games, singing, seated dance, flower arranging, memory boxes from the Discovery Museum, puzzles, quiz's, local history books, arts and crafts and much more.

The sessions provide an opportunity for carers to create new memories with the person that they care for, possible respite from caring responsibilities for an hour or two and new ideas on what might work well at home, and for the person living with dementia the sessions provide a safe and welcoming space to engage in a fun and meaningful activity and social interaction.

Through this project we found that carers are often unable to leave the person with dementia alone to be able to access support themselves, so once a month during our weekly Memory Tea we use another room in the building to hold a session for the carers. While the person living with dementia is engaging in an activity the carers have an opportunity to gain information or ask questions of our various guests.

We worked with the ICB in September 2022 Search held "Dementia, Navigating the Maze" conference at St James' Park to give people living with dementia and their carers an opportunity to have their voices heard and meet with professionals and organisations who offer dementia services and support to discuss what is important to them and how their support needs should be met.

Thanks to a grant from Home Instead we were able to take 30 people living with dementia and their carers on a trip to Beamish Museum, the trip allowed people that would not usually be able to attend because of memory concerns or transport issues the opportunity to have a lovely day out. We were able to provide doorstep transport, entry to the museum, 50's style afternoon tea provided by Cornerstone in Benwell and staff support on the day to ease the pressure on carers. Beamish Museum volunteers put on a fabulous Music and Melodies session in their 1950's Hall which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Vita Health

NHS Talking Therapies

In September 2022, Search partnered with Vita Health Group employing a Community Link Worker, to improve access to NHS Talking Therapies for older people and form pathways to a range of wellbeing services/activities across Newcastle.

Since September, we have seen an increase in older people coming forward about their mental health, strengthened partnerships with external organisations, delivered wellbeing sessions and worked with Newcastle Building Society to provide a wellness hub.

Our link worker facilitates mindfulness activities and a safe space for peer support. The project has received positive feedback from service users and other professionals, providing access to Talking Therapy for people who otherwise, may face multiple barriers.

'Mrs X is giving serious thought to attending the West Denton support group and volunteer work at some point. Speaks very highly of you and your support.'

'Thank you so much for the support you are giving our customers and making such a difference to their lives. I've had fantastic feedback and these home visits are wonderful (long may they last)'



Search in numbers

Advice and Information

annual gains

£488,647.13

Dementia Advice Centre

annual gains

£72,882.24

Combined annual gains

£561,529.37

Types of activities delivered

101

My mobility has been poor and when we could not meet each other (during the pandemic), she helped set up Zoom Bingo so that a few of us (friends) could see each other, chat and play Bingo. It has helped me slowly change my outlook on life especially when I could not walk far was unable to leave my house. Now I feel a lot happier and each day.

Attending Search's groups has brought me like minded company and a sense of purpose.

Number of activity sessions
delivered

1153

Times sessions were
attended

8845

Individuals who's
circumstances were improved
as a result of the Advice and
Information service

501

We dealt with

1838

Advice and Information
enquiries

I have sons and a daughter, they all have to work and even though they love and care about me dearly, they cannot be with me all the time to help me deal with every issue that comes up. Due to my limited English I am fortunate to have met Lai Yee at SEARCH, she has helped me with benefit entitlements, energy and broadband issues as well as reading and explaining some of my letters which I do not understand.

We now feel part of a bigger family with support available no matter the query, from dementia diagnosis to making sure absolutely everything you could think of is in place, the support has been invaluable, thank you!

Regular volunteers for
Search

70

Volunteers contributed

7570

hours of their time

Advice and Information

In 2022-2023 the Advice and Information Service at SEARCH has seen three new advice workers, Meg, Flo and Sharon joining our small Team, strengthening it even more. Our A&I service has been able to achieve the AQS standard by the ASA again in April 2022.

Advice and information has been a core service for Search since its inception over 40 years ago, helping disadvantaged communities by providing free and confidential advice on their doorstep. Our job is to assist and support our clients to maximize their income with benefits checks and entitlement claims, resolve issues relating to benefits, housing, and consumer matters.

Our service also provides advice and information to people living with Dementia and their careers, as part of our Dementia Advice project and Search volunteer Liz has been providing free advice on Lasting Power of Attorney which has proven to be so vital to those whose lives are affected by Dementia.

We continue to deliver our face-to-face at drop-ins across the west end in Benwell, Cruddas Park, Lemington, Blakelaw and most recently we have extended to Kenton and Fawdon to meet the needs of the residents in those areas. Residents can also continue to contact us by phone or via our website five days a week.

In 2022-2023 we have seen a 50% increase in the numbers of clients seen and 45% increase in the financial gains we have managed to achieve for our clients. For a small team, we are proud to achieve this.

But these figures are not what the Advice and Information Service is all about. We feel very rewarded when a client comes back and gives us positive feedback.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL YOUR HELP...So
success with the PIP as well...
(my partner*) and I are very grateful for all your input,
we have really appreciated it.
SEARCH is a brilliant organisation and I shall certainly
mention it to friends....

Advice and Information
Drop In sessions held
this year

148



Successful Lasting Power
Of Attorneys registered this
year

21

West End Warmers

Energy Redress Scheme

The West End Warmers started in March 2022 and this service was aimed at the West End – Post Codes NE4, NE5 AND NE15 to clients aged 50+ who have experienced energy issues, needed assistance with switching providers, dealing with energy debt and offering small energy measures. The clients are updated on the changing deals and government support on offer and criteria for eligibility.

Upon a home visit, the Energy Adviser will assess the client's needs in the property and will then offer the Small Energy measures to the client which is not means tested. The small measures will be installed by Search's own Handyman who will arrange an appointment with the client.

We offer – Door and Window Seals, Letter Box Brush Plates, Draughts and rain Excluders Threshold, Brush Seals, Storm Guard Draught Proofing, Radiator heat reflective foil, Power Down Plugs and Hot Water Tank Jackets and LED light Bulbs.



Energy Information
sessions attended and
delivered

30

Clients who have benefited
from Energy Advice

340

Case Study

Our West End Warmers project supports people to get on top of their energy bills. People like Frieda*...

Our Energy Advisor, Meg met Frieda at one of our regular drop-ins, where people can come for a cuppa, a chat and find out more about what we do and how we can help them. Frieda had been having a lot of bother with her energy bills and had not received any of the £400 she was due as part of the Government's Energy Bill Support Scheme. Meg knew this could not be right and got straight on the case.

Frieda's energy provider had changed several times in recent years, and it had been difficult to work out what was going on with her bills. Meg helped Frieda call the energy provider and it turned out that the account information was wrong, and in fact someone else's name was on the account. Finally, with Meg's help, and a lengthy investigation by the energy company, Frieda's energy supply issues were sorted out and she received the £400 that she was entitled to. Frieda was over the moon with the results, and the support from Meg.

West End Friends

In 2022 West End Friends has continued to support our friends in the South Asian and Chinese communities with our group work and one-to-one support by our volunteers.

Our weekly Asian ladies social in Fenham helps bring older women together for social interaction, to share food and laughter! At these social groups, the ladies can do gentle seated exercise, Tai Chi, creative craftwork, improving their physical and mental health.



Our Asian men's engagement worker has been increasing Asian male participation. Search understand that there are few activities for Asian men and are working hard to offer activities that meet their needs. We have a regular group at a Chai shop in the West End of Newcastle where the men can get together chat over a free chai/tea/coffee.

Our engagement with the Chinese community reaches residents from the West End to the City Centre due to geographic spread of the community, delivering activities such as bingo, walks and outings for our friends in the Chinese community. In the last year we have provided 885 volunteering hours for our WEF befriending service.



2022-2023 has also seen the return of our large celebration events. May 2022 we had a Jubilee afternoon Tea, Christmas 2022 we teamed up with Independent Age to put on non-traditional Christmas lunch with 50 people attending and delivered 120 Christmas gift bags to the Chinese community; we had a Christmas shopping trip to York in November 2022 and in Spring 2023, we had our Chinese New Year celebration bringing together different cultures and heritages over food and dance workshops with 58 people participating.



Giving

For the 4th year our Volunteer Christine arranged a Foresters Grant which enabled us to deliver over 100 winter warmer gift bags to older people living in the West End who may not otherwise receive a Christmas Present. The bags were filled with Christmas Treats, slippers, puzzle books and a fleece throw to help them stay warm.

We partnered with Home Instead once again on their Santa for a Senior project, Home Instead Community Workers brought the donated gifts they had gathered through schools in the project to our Christmas Lunches so everyone who attended the Lunches left with a gift. We know from our Home From Hospital project that many older people are admitted to hospital with no belongings, they are without a support network to bring in their personal effects. So Christine arrange another grant from Foresters we have been able to deliver 52 packs with toiletries, a towel, a crossword book, pen and a shawl for ladies. We hope that this will make the stay in hospital for the people receiving bags more dignified knowing they have a wash bag and towel they can call their own.



Support Services

Home From Hospital

This is Aimi; our Home From Hospital Worker, Home from hospital has been running since January 2022 and since October 2023 referrals have increased by 80%. We support individuals upon discharge from hospital for 6 weeks to help with essential food shopping, prescription pick up, signposting and well being checks.



Search@Home

Search@Home, Search's own support brand has continued to support older people to live independently in their own home, with tasks including house keeping, cleaning, laundry, support with correspondence, medical appointments and community access. Our handy helper has supported people with small DIY tasks, decorating and gardening.

Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue our suicide prevention and our mental health recovery service delivered in partnership with Healthworks has supported 37 people on their "recovery journey". We worked with a local church to set up a Men's Shed; a safe space offering peer support and meaningful activity to local men.

Here are few journeys:

X from no community social interaction, lack of confidence and anxiety in performing life tasks (phone calls, appointments). The support of the service has helped x find a way to engaging in weekly men's group, fortnightly walking group and developing self-awareness of emotions and own physical health.

Y - "you are helping more than you'll ever know", providing a consistent and reliable social and partially therapeutic connection each week, gently challenging with a task which is being avoided, and revisiting the outcome (successful or otherwise) the following week. Y continues to engage in community activities and tries out new ones, and different way of engaging to what has been in place long term.

Z - Significant change in outlook and appearance, gently challenging what is possible alongside allowing space for z own thoughts. Z has an improved outlook and able to go out with family members to quiet social occasions, eating is also improved and z is now interested in exploring a social activity.

Chain Reaction

Over the year the Pioneers have worked with 798 people, engaging and building confidence and friendships. They have established 6 activity hives and friendship groups, a great example of a successful hive was built in partnership with The Grange Throckley who have provided an accessible venue for our Pioneers to work from.

"I've been very impressed with the support from Search, it allows me to mix with others."

Lunch Clubs

Following the holt of our lunch clubs during the pandemic we are pleased to see them back up and running at full capacity with a special thanks to the Masonic fund who are subsidising our lunch club with a grant for three years.

Bishops Court

The popular Bishops Court Thursday lunch club has seen 30 people regularly attending enjoying weekly activities and a two course lunch with friends. The friends of Bishops Court have celebrated the Queens platinum Jubilee alongside the residents of Bishops Court. A summer trip to Whitley Bay was the highlight of the Bishops Court Calendar alongside other celebrations such as Halloween and Christmas when parties were held.



Buy and Bite

Our weekly trips to Morrisons for supported shopping and a bite with friends has been re-established and are as popular as ever. Our inner west Cowgate trip is full to capacity and our outer west West Denton is filling up quickly

We held 69 Buy and Bite's lunch clubs this year!

We held 50 Bishops Court lunch clubs this year!



A special thank you to

Search's work in the community is only possible because of the generosity of our benefactors and supporters. We would like to thank...

Prime, Ballinger Trust, LGA Foundation, Newcastle Building Society, Sir James Knot Trust, Thirteen Hosing Group, Rank Foundation, Home Instead, The Energy Saving Trust, Rothley Trust, Newcastle Fund, The National Lottery Community Fund and The Awards For All, Independent Age, Henry Smith Charity, The Shears Foundation, The William Leach Charity, Reece Foundation, The Masonic Charitable Trust, Fogo, Ringtons Fund, Ward Grants from Lemington, Benwell and Scotswood, Elswick, Wingrove. Blakelaw and North Fenham Parish council, Independent Age, Newcastle Council, Vita Health and North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Search would like to give a huge round of applause to all of our supporters who have attended our fundraising events, bought raffles tickets or made donations to the charity.

HOW YOU CAN HELP TO....

Spread a little Sunshine

Many older people in the west end are affected by isolation, disadvantage and poor health. We won't accept that. We support older people in west Newcastle live happier, healthier lives through advice, support and activities. **Because age should just be a number!**

Find out below how you can help to Spread a little Sunshine for older people in Newcastle.

1

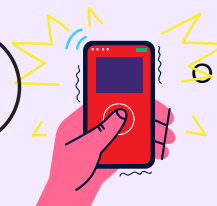
Help us Bake Lives Better
by holding a coffee morning.
(it could brighten someone's day!)



3

Get sponsored for a Dare to
Wear Yellow walk in your
local area.

2



Share our story online
on Facebook and Instagram
@searchnewcastle

4

Get in touch and tell us how you're going
to spread a bit of sunshine in Newcastle...

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