



Search Newcastle

Supporting older people in Newcastle



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023 - 2024

Introduction

This year has been our busiest yet. August saw our return to Adelaide Terrace with opening of our "Pop in Centre" where Sylvi Wood, our longest serving volunteer cut the ribbon and declared the centre open. Our Advice and Information team have been working non-stop to help people through the cost-of-living crisis, with new weekly drop in sessions in Kenton, Fawdon and the Grainger Market. We have seen a big increase in the successes from the team too. Demand for our Search@Home services is increasing each month and we have seen an exciting monthly timetable of activities bring people together and form new friendships. We embarked on a new 1-year project "Ageing Better" working into 5 YHN age designated Highrise and Tower Blocks to rebuild communities, bring the community rooms back to life and engage people back into the wider community. We also provided a new Social Prescriber to the frailty team in the Outer West Primary Care Network.

So after a bumper year in 23/24, like most of the Charity Sector we are facing a much leaner time in 24/25 as number of our larger funds have come to an end and grant funders themselves feel the pinch and have less to give, while we balance that against the ever rising costs of delivery. At Search we are committed to improving life for Older People in Newcastle, whilst we will have to revise some of our provision, we will be looking at other ways we can generate income to keep our vital and most popular service offers in place over the coming year. But Search is 45 years old this year and you can be assured we will be celebrating that milestone.



The Pop In Centre

After a long presence of almost 40 years on Adelaide Terrace, Search lost that "shop front" and worked out of an office base, we received lots of feedback telling us we belonged on Adelaide Terrace. Benwell wasn't Benwell without Search, people missed the opportunity to "pop in" and chat to staff and volunteers, ask a question or pick up information.

In August 2023 after almost a 4 year absence we were glad to bring Search back to "The Terrace" in the form of our new "Pop In Centre". Our longest serving volunteer, Sylvi cut the ribbon on opening day, this magical little place soon won the hearts of the locals and was christened "The PIC" and someone commented "wey you know ya part of Benwell when you get a nickname"

Here we offer our popular Advice and Information service, volunteers are on hand to have a cuppa and chat with anyone who wants to call in, we provided a warm space and hot drinks in the winter months, a range of fun activity afternoons and it provides access to other community services such as the Benwell Bridge Food Pantry in partnership with Cornerstone.



Volunteering

Aimi Corbett took over as Volunteer Coordinator in August 2023. To celebrate our volunteers Aimi has arranged events including a Christmas party, where Search expressed their gratitude to our remarkable volunteers, who contribute to the work we carry out in the community. We focus on celebrating the dedication and commitment of our volunteers throughout the year, and ensure they know how valuable they are to the work we do.

We have implemented new induction and training for volunteers, and are committed to ensuring our volunteers feel equipped, and empowered to carry out their roles. Incorporating "Our Approach" in all inductions, to ensure volunteers have an indepth understanding of the values that underpin the work we carry out at Search.

Search are very proud of our volunteers, their passion and generosity continue to fuel our efforts in creating positive changes to our community. We hope that we continue to grow and build upon our existing pool of volunteers, and celebrate their success in the annual volunteering week.



Phone Buddies

Phone buddies has continue to offer telephone befriending and are thrilled to share its success in bringing companionship and connection to those who are housebound, isolated and who need it most. Through regular phone calls, our volunteers provide a friendly ear, meaningful conversation, and something to look forward to for those who feel isolated. The impact of phone buddies goes beyond conversation, its about fostering connections with our Search friends and enriching lives. From sharing stories, to offering support, and encouragement where appropriate to join our activities. Our volunteers are helping to break down barriers, and create a supportive community where nobody feels alone. Thankyou to all our phone buddy volunteers, for your compassion and dedication. In the coming year we are relaunching phone buddies, and we have new volunteers on board to help us reach more people in our community. In doing this we are able to continue to spread some Search sunshine to those who need it most.



Coronation Champion Award



This year we nominated Christine for the Kings Coronation Champion Award for her commitment to volunteering at Search. We were delighted to hear she won the award and was invited to the Kings Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle.



Community Activities

Ageing Better

January 2024 saw us conclude our Lottery Funded outreach work into Age Designated High Rise blocks across the West and North of Newcastle working closely with Your Home Newcastle. Sam, our worker engaged residents to breathe new life into empty community rooms and build confidence getting out and about in the community in a post pandemic world. Weekly groups met within the community space engaging in a variety of fun activities, Coronation and Christmas parties were some of the highlights.



Trips saw people build confidence to venture further afield, including trips to Durham Market, Beamish and Tyneside Cinema to see the Blues Brothers.

As a result of this year's interventions The Larches Residents now lead their own weekly bingo group.

Tynedale House Residents have had support to meet Connected Voice and set up their own committee, enabling them to independently access funding for their own activities, resources, and trips out.

Moving forward Opencast have provided funding for Sam to continue working one day a week on this project, continuing to support the existing groups and extend the project in some of sheltered accommodation in the West End, for the coming year.

Inner West

Our activities in the Inner West this year included a Summer Evening social where people donned their floral garlands and danced the night away to live music and laughter.

The wonderful Semitones provided a Summer and a Christmas concert in the atmospheric St James' and St Basil's church.

We teamed up with HealthWorks to deliver a healthy eating course, teaching people how to cook simple healthy meals for one using a variety of easy appliances such as the air fryer; followed by enjoying the freshly cooked food and socialising together.

Cruddas Park and Blakelaw Hubs provided games and activities alongside access to vital advice and information. Blakelaw Hub enjoyed a series of talks on local history delivered by St James Environment and History and the Newcastle Picture History Guys. Other activities included seated dance, card making, a weekly coffee afternoon at our pop in centre encouraging chat and reminiscing.

Our Knit and Natter group teamed up with Ballet Lorent to knit the scenery for their ballet, The Velveteen Rabbit. The knitters worked with other local knitters before attending the show to see their designs come to life.

At Christmas there were lots of Christmas craft sessions, a Christmas lunch providing a 2 course traditional meal to 30 people complete with a visit from Santa and Christmas presents for everyone.



Outer West

Our physical activity groups continued to expand, people attending remarked on the increased health benefits and social opportunities brought by attending. We offered activities such as walking, dancing groups, Tai Chi, gardening and gentle seated exercise.

Social interaction is a big part of wellbeing. We offered this with groups such as Knit & Natter, Westerhope Wellbeing, Men @ 10 and Search Rocks. These groups showcase various ways to look after our mental health and have become a much valued addition to peoples weekly calendar.

Working in partnership with Throckley Community Hall, we hosted Summer and Christmas evening socials with live singing, entertainment, bingo and a pie and pea supper.



Trips

Our Summer day trips this year saw 4 coaches full of happy people sample the delights of the Northeast visiting Berwick, Alnwick and Amble, Richmond, and Whitby.



We also organised some Minibus trips for those who felt less confident or with reduced mobility to Hexham and Dobbies Garden Centre in Ponteland.



Listening Lunches/ Evaluations

Search pride itself on meeting the needs of the people we support, we like to ensure that we engage people to shape our services and tell us about the impact we make on them.

We held 2 "Listening Lunches" to get feedback.

This is the difference we made:

88%
told us they
made new
friends through
Search

91%
reported
feeling fitter
and healthier
by attending
our activities

96%
reported
feeling
happier

93%
reported
having and
improved
social life.

Memory Support

Thanks to funding from the Ballinger Trust Search were able to continue to provide vital support to people living with dementia or memory concerns along with their family and carers. Our Dementia Engagement Worker has supported over 140 people living with dementia, giving personalised advice and information, offering a fully comprehensive screening for everyone referred. This screening ensured that individuals got everything they were entitled to, they knew the support that was available and frequently involved introducing people to services they didn't know about. Our popular weekly memory tea has been a safe place for people living with dementia and their family to attend. With different activities focusing on fun, enjoyment, skills and cognition. The group has been a great place to make friends and build connections with other people in similar circumstances. We have danced, sung, painted, baked, reminisced and laughed. We have also ran 2 monthly Singing for your Brain sessions which were attended by people with memory concerns, dementia and individuals that enjoy singing and understand the benefits of what singing can have on our brain.

If Singing wasn't for you we worked with Cornerstone providing a monthly Memory Café in Benwell, where homecooked traditional meals and delicious puddings were enjoyed. Search also supported Everyturn, Keyring and St Martin's Centre to set up their own Memory Teas to spread the offer of a safe space for those living with dementia and their carers across the city. Search provided guidance and shared information to implement our successful Memory Tea model.

Through collaboration with Newcastle University and The Centre for Ageing and Vitality, our Dementia Engagement Worker helped to create a Dementia Training session for staff including our Memory Tea partners upskilling them on working with people who live with dementia.

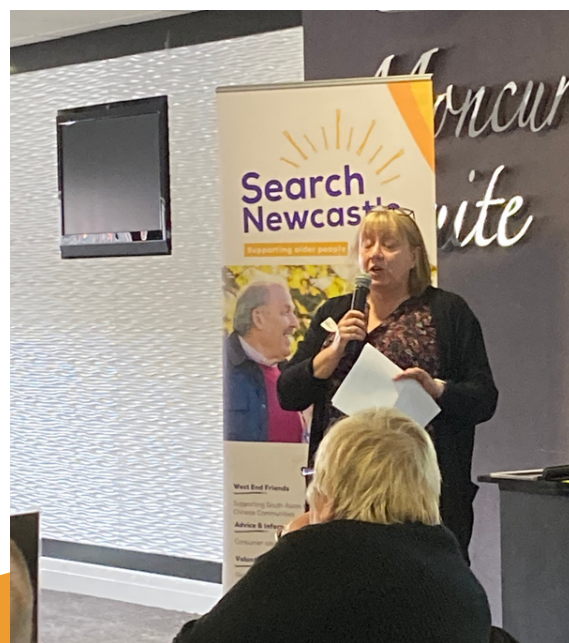


Navigating the Maze Conference

In May 2023 Search facilitated in partnership a second Dementia Conference funded by Northeast and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board. Over 100 invites went out to people living with dementia, carers and professionals. This conference had a range of speakers on subjects which the delegates of the previous conference requested more information on.

The table discussions were an opportunity to reflect on the draft Dementia Strategy and influence further development of the strategy, while giving people living dementia and their carers the opportunity to talk to professionals and organisations from across the city. We gathered all thoughts shared on the day to create a report that will form the basis of the Newcastle Dementia Strategy working together with the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, Newcastle City Council, Voluntary Sector organisations and people with lived experience of Dementia.

Feedback stated that the day was informative and people living with dementia and family/carers appreciated an opportunity to share their thoughts on what is needed in Newcastle to be a truly dementia friendly city.



Search in numbers

Advice and Information
annual gains

£846,087.02

Dementia Advice Centre
annual gains

£110,884.34

Combined annual gains

£956,971.36

Types of activities delivered

134

“They've brought purpose back into my life. It doesn't seem so bleak anymore. I'm actually enjoying things again...I'm actually going out and about and doing different things and it's nice to meet other people and have good conversation. They've (Search) has been a life saver for me.”

As a family we can't give enough praise, through what has been a difficult journey we have felt well supported having someone to check in regularly and problem solve along the way'

Number of activity sessions
delivered

1233

Times sessions were
attended

11,097

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

749

We dealt with

2941

Advice and Information
enquiries

“Without Search helping
me with my pension credit
and housing benefit, I don't
know what I would have
done. It has saved me a
great deal of stress. I can
be myself with Search staff,
I feel comfortable during
these appointments.”

“It's just nice to have
company and someone to
talk to. Also the fact that
there is no pressure on
joining in means if I have a
bad day I don't feel awful
not coming cos I know
people will understand.
And I really enjoy the
variety on offer”

People who
volunteer their time
to
Search

85

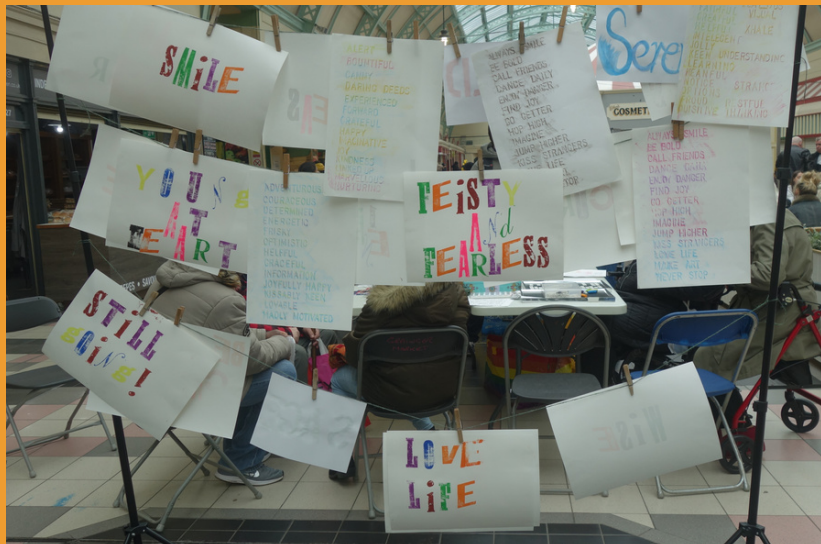
Volunteers contributed

7373

hours of their time

Age Without Limits Action Day

Search organised an Ageism Awareness Day as a result of funding from The Centre for Ageing Better. Working with Newcastle City Council, St Martins Centre, NEFA, and Home Group, Search planned a range of activities taking place in the Grainger Market showcasing age in positive light. Activities included creative writing where people told us the language they preferred and words such as "Elderly" shouldn't be used, Printing workshops where people could print out positive words and phrases, Singing along session to local and popular songs, and a memory walk of the nightlife spots from the past in the city centre. A display of the creative writing and preferred age positive language will be showcased in Libraries across the city in coming months.



Vita Health

NHS Talking Therapies

We have continued to improve Access to Talking Therapies, and the growth of our peer support sessions has produced some fantastic outcomes for recipients. Over the past 12 months, our Talking Therapies Community Link Worker, has been committed to supporting Search Friends address the barriers to improved emotional wellbeing.

Trust in the service has flourished, 100% of people responded "Yes" when asked whether they felt more comfortable engaging in Talking Therapies since linking to Search, staff offering home visits, 121 appointments and telephone follow ups for all.

In addition to Talking Therapies, the demand for Search wide services remains high as we continue to link people to a range of projects such as lunch clubs, community activities, advice and information and volunteering.



"An excellent service. Staff are fantastic, it has helped me a lot, well done." – Mrs M

In February 2024, we delivered the first "Building Self-Esteem" interactive workshop in Newcastle City Library, an extremely positive experience for attendees, from which our link worker has produced further content (above), encouraging as many people as possible to prioritise their wellbeing and engage in self-care practices.

Feedback shows that 62% of group members have noticed a significant change in their mood since attending groups at Kenton, West Denton, and City Centre, as well as forming new friendships and acquaintances with other attendees.

Search continues to support people during waiting periods for counselling, offering holistic, preventative interventions that bring people together. Link worker, Kat is dedicated to reviewing and developing her approach to the project, undertaking necessary training, including her most recent completion of Connect 5, an evidence based, NHS approved toolkit, rolling out nationally through public health. This enables Kat to share these helpful strategies with those she supports and the local community. May 2024 welcomes Mental Health Awareness Week in which we will continue to promote Talking Therapies, hosting our own 'Be Kind to your Mind' event with workshops, refreshments, and self – help resources. The future of the project is bright, we anticipate positive growth in the year to come.

Advice and Information

The Advice Service has had an exceptional year in 2023-2024 helping residents gain just over £900,000 in financial gains and dealing with over 2941 enquiries. We have also seen the opening of our own Pop-In Centre back on Adelaide Terrace where we can deliver face-to-face advice. Local residents are once again able to pop in and see a friendly face, receive free and confidential Advice and Information as well as join or book onto activities.

Our Pop-in Centre being a central Hub for West End Residents was a registered a Warm Space last Winter offering a place for people to come in out of the cold for a hot cup of tea or coffee. The space is also a collection point for The Benwell Bridge Pantry where Search partnered Cornerstone to offer residents a choice to purchase lower cost shopping at very affordable prices on a weekly basis.

Our small team of advisers have also delivered advice in Outer West Hubs including, Lemington and Blakelaw, striving to reach as many local West End residents as we can.

In the last year we were also able to develop three new drop-ins and advice Hubs in the Grainger Market, Kenton and Fawdon. These are areas which Search has not reached in the past but were aware of the demand. Through a grant from Independent Age, Search have been able to employ two Advice Workers to provide quality advice and information to local residents from across the city and in these two wards.



West End Warmers

This was the second year of West End Warmers bring energy advice to older people in NE4, NE5 and NE15; the positive results have led to continued funding for another two years.

During the energy crisis Search Friends have benefited from energy advice to deal with smart meter issues, energy debts, representation to the Ombudsman and assistance obtaining goodwill payments. We have installed small energy measures and supported applications for larger energy measures such as solar panels, insulation, boilers and double glazing.

Total savings of

£29 680

as a result of grants for small energy measures & loft installations, solar panels, boilers

248

Free LED light bulbs

428

Free reflective radiator foils were individually installed.

I would give Meg a 10/10 and the advice given has made a huge difference in my life.

Adviser was absolutely brilliant.

West End Friends

This year, West End Friends have participated in focus group research in topics such as Mental Health in Asian Women for Gateshead and Newcastle (partnering Age UK Gateshead and North Tyneside and Northumberland Mind), The Experience of Ageing amongst Chinese and South Asian Women in Newcastle (Partnering Elders Council and Newcastle University) producing reports on the need of mental health services that are appropriate for users. Other Research our West End Friends have participated in include, Mediterranean Diet and Dementia (SA women), Feedback on Newcastle Urgent Treatment Centres (SA Women), Feedback on NHS promotional materials (Chinese Community). Our South Asian Mens group the Monday Gup Shup has been involved in research on the Impact of Air Pollution on Health with Newcastle University. We continue to promote health and wellbeing through activities that are culturally appropriate and enjoyable. Our regular South Asian Women social group is well attended and these ladies from different Asian ethnicities have truly bonded over social interaction and engagement, despite speaking different languages and having different cultures. Our Chinese community group activities range from Walks, Bingo, Zoom Bingo to Table Tennis.

In February 2024 we celebrated Chinese New Year with communities in the West End coming together to enjoy food and cultural performances and activities. We had over 60 people in attendance to bring in the Year of the Dragon.



Giving

This Year with the help of grants from Foresters we donated 50 wellbeing packs to older people who were admitted to hospital, the packs included essential items such as Toiletries, Haircare products, puzzle books and mints.

100 Christmas gift bags loaded with Christmas treats, such as Christmas Cakes, Biscuits, Calendars, Sweets and Puzzle books were distributed to local older people many of whom wouldn't have received a gift as they have no family or friendship networks.

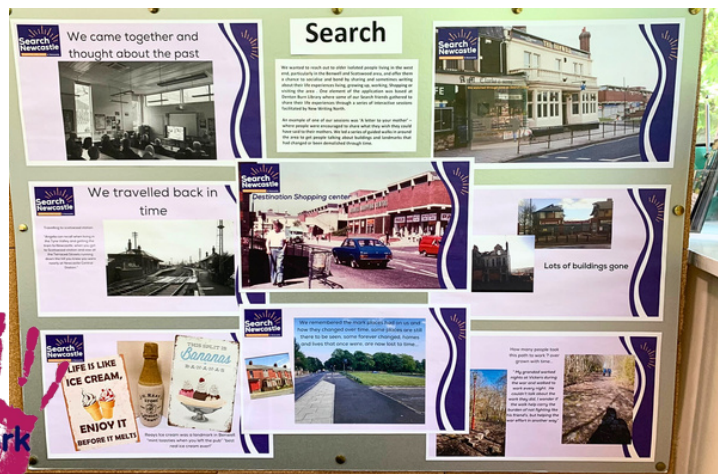
We also worked with Home Instead and their "Santa for a Senior" scheme to ensure that everyone at our Lunch Club and Christmas Lunch received a gift.



Make Your Mark

Search received funding from "Make Your Mark", allowing us to run a number of sessions including creative writing, history walks and some video sessions sparking memories and allowing us to record the memories and rich history of Benwell and Scotswood as remembered by those who lived, worked, shopped or visited the area.

make your mark



Support Services

Search@Home

Search @ Home continues to support customers to maintain their independence and thrive in later life. We have further developed services for clients who are living with dementia, cognitive impairment and hoarding issues. Thanks to our passionate support team, we have received many positive comments from our customers and their family members:

Over 1200 hours of Home Help+ support has been delivered this year to Search Friends.

Search helps me with my shopping and to keep on top of housework. I look forward to my regular helpers visiting me. They are concerned for my health and are good company. I worry about money and they help me with this.

The support worker has been amazing with my sister, and she so enjoys her visit.

I'm currently feeling much more positive about things and I enjoy going again to a weekly lunchtime social that I've attended for over 6 years and I've recently started attending Search's Monday Meets for a catchup and a coffee.

Thank you for creating a Handyperson service, it is something I value. The work was carried out carefully and with some helpful information about the problem(s).

The support worker keeps the good work for me. I am happier than before. Now, I sweep the floor and keep my home tidy. I change the pillowcase. I go to a barber shop to have my hair cut and my beard trimmed.

Thank you for helping my brother come to see our mother. My mother is 103 years old. My brother is grateful for your help as well.

This year
365.25
hours of
cleaning was
carried out



Home From Hospital

Since April 2023 to date we have supported **66** people to settle back at home from hospital.

Since November 2023 referrals have increased by 56% since we have taken over Home From Hospital support in the East of the city, alongside our partners Everyturn. We have had two new volunteers join us to help deliver Home From Hospital support.

Chain Reaction

This year Chain Reaction worked with 175 new people, introducing and supporting them to new social opportunities. People reported having increased confidence, wider social circles, better connection to their communities and making new friendships, some people have gone on to volunteer for Search. Trips to Blyth, Hexham and Dobbies Garden Centre were organised by our Pioneers for those who struggled to access our main trips. Our Hives continued to grow in popularity with the one we run in partnership with The Grange in Throckley and our Monday meets in the city centre being the most popular. Intensive short term support was offered to 14 people to overcome a particular barrier enabling to be more confident and independent through our targeted support service.

This year we
worked with
175
new referrals



Lunch Clubs

This year our Lunch Clubs continued to have strong regular attendance with a waiting list for our Bishops Court Club. The clubs enjoyed trips to Blyth Beach sampling the local fish, chips and ice cream, Dobbies Garden Centre to see all of the plants in full bloom and they enjoyed a Christmas Shopping Trip to Newcastle's Christmas Markets for those Christmas treats. Special celebration events were held for the Kings Coronation and Christmas where the local singing legend that is Shirley Mac brought the fun and entertainment putting a smile on everyone's face.



A special thank you to



SIR JAMES KNOTT TRUST



HOSPITAL OF GOD
Here for Everyone



Newcastle Fund
The National Lottery - Ageing Better,
Reaching Communities and Awards
for All.

Frazer Trust

Kellet

The North East and North Cumbria
Integrated Care Board
Benwell and Scottswood Ward Grant
Make Your Mark
Dickon Trust



BALLINGER
CHARITABLE TRUST

**NORTH
OF TYNE**
~~~~~  
**COMBINED  
AUTHORITY**



**Garfield Weston**  
FOUNDATION



**Masonic**  
Charitable Foundation



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