



# Impact Report

1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025



# A word from our Chief Executive



I am delighted to present our Impact Report for 2024/25, which clearly demonstrates the invaluable role Gateshead 50+ continues to play within our community. Our core mission is to offer affordable, age-appropriate activities to help older people stay active and socially connected, preventing isolation and challenging ageing stereotypes.

The necessity of our work is evident. Our data shows that 45% of our beneficiaries live alone, 67% have a long-term health condition, and 60% use our community pantry. The activities and projects we oversee at Gateshead 50+ are co-created with support and input from our beneficiaries. This not only allows us to ensure we are providing appropriate opportunities to socialise, exercise, and learn, but also to be certain that what we do is created FOR older people BY older people.

We are certainly not out of the woods in relation to the cost-of-living crisis in the UK, particularly here in Gateshead, and we will endeavour to continue making as much of what we offer free at the point of use as possible so that no older person, regardless of their financial situation, is left out.

**Craig Bankhead**

Chief Executive

# About Gateshead 50+



Gateshead 50+ is an independent charity dedicated to helping make Gateshead a great place to grow older. We offer a wide range of affordable, age-appropriate activities designed to help older people stay active, socially connected, and engaged in their community.

We believe that it's never too early to start preparing for later life and by lowering barriers to participation, we can help prevent isolation, support older people's mental and physical wellbeing, and make ageing in Gateshead a more fulfilling experience.

Each year, we offer over 1,000 activities for older people at our Deckham wellness hub. Since 2018, we have also set up hundreds of classes for over 50s in community venues across Gateshead, contributing to a thriving network of local opportunities for older people to socialise, exercise, and learn.

We aren't interested in reinforcing the stereotypes of ageing. Our programme of activities is designed to challenge those stereotypes and build a community where older people feel valued as contributors, not just recipients of support.

## Our Trustees

Bill Dick, Chair  
Marion McMahan, Treasurer  
Margaret Barrett  
Joice Ndambona (retired October 2024)  
Sue Renforth (retired October 2024)

## Our Staff Team

Craig Bankhead, Chief Executive  
Nicola Bruce, Health & Wellbeing Manager  
Lola McPartland, Project Manager

# Our Impact

As a charity, we work hard to ensure that the activities we offer our beneficiaries are making a difference to their lives. We evaluate our work by compiling case studies and asking beneficiaries to complete functional assessments and/or surveys. Case studies are available on our website and functional assessment results can be found in our project reports.

Every year, we survey the beneficiaries who visit our Deckham hub to ensure the opportunities we offer are meeting their needs. We are pleased to share the highlights from our October 2024 survey. Firstly, about our beneficiaries:



**Our beneficiaries range in age from 49 to 91. Our average beneficiary age is 72.2.**



**74% of our beneficiaries are female  
26% of our beneficiaries are male**



**67% of our beneficiaries have a long term health condition**



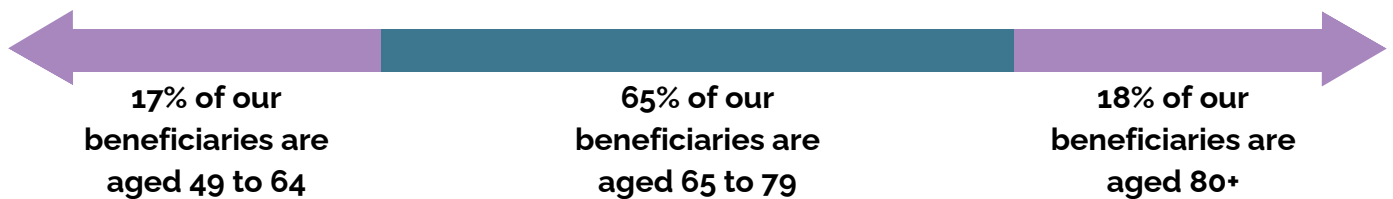
**18% of our beneficiaries have caring responsibilities**



**45% of our beneficiaries live alone**



**60% of our beneficiaries use our no-questions-asked community pantry**



**Our average beneficiary visits us 2.25 times per week.**

**Our most active beneficiaries take part in 9 of our activities per week.**

- **52% take part in at least two activities per week**
- **36% take part in at least three activities per week**
- **19% take part in at least four activities per week**
- **10% take part in at least five activities per week**

Here's what our beneficiaries had to say about the impact taking part in our activities has on their lives:



**89% have made friends with whom they now socialise**



**68% have learned new skills**



**77% feel happier**



**50% visit their GP less frequently since joining us**



**89% feel their physical health has improved**



**91% feel their mental health has improved**



**100% say we offer newcomers a warm welcome**



**100% say they would recommend our activities to family and friends**



# Our Year in Review

We are delighted to share the highlights of our 2024/25 activities programme. This year, we focused on expanding the programme of activities on offer at our Deckham wellness hub and increasing our beneficiaries' awareness of ways to improve their financial resilience.

## April through June 2024



**SINGING for the Brain**

Join us for a feel-good Friday singalong!  
Our dementia-friendly singing group is open to all in later life -- no talent required!

**FREE**  
19 April - 28 June  
£3.50 thereafter  
(free for carers)

Every other Friday from 19 April  
1:30 - 3 pm  
Centenary Methodist Church  
Main Street  
Crawcrook  
Ryton  
NE40 4TY

For information, please ring MHA Communities Gateshead West on 01207 563825.

mha  
GATESHEAD 50+  
COMMUNITY FUND  
Singing for the Brain



British Dementia Foundation  
Love to Move

**LOVE TO MOVE**

A fun, age & dementia friendly seated movement programme to music.

Physical, emotional & cognitive benefits designed to get you moving more and having fun.

Love to Move is the first cognitive enhancement exercise programme of its kind in the UK, based on scientific research.

Demonstrable benefits in the physical, emotional and cognitive aspects of older people especially those living with Dementia.

**FREE**  
18 April - 23 May  
£3 thereafter  
Stay for a cuppa and a chat after class!

Where? Thursdays afternoons 2pm- 4pm  
Where? Dovecote Care Home Hookergate Lane, Huger Road, High Spen, NE39 2BQ

MHA Communities Gateshead West  
01207 563825  
gatesheadwest@mha.org.uk

LOTTERY FUNDED



**THURSDAYS**  
11 - 1  
Gateshead 50+  
Deckham NE8 3UB

**ART GROUP**

Bring your supplies for use ours) and work on your project while enjoying a cuppa and friendly company!  
£1 per session (toward group outings)  
No need to book.  
Ring 0191 438 1721 for info.

GATESHEAD 50+

- supported MHA Communities Gateshead West in the set up of Singing for the Brain and Love to Move (two new activities suitable for those living with dementia)
- due to high demand, our bi-monthly art group began meeting weekly
- support from Pargiter Trust ensured that three of our Deckham fitness classes would remain free for another year
- our craft group welcomed Steph Capewell, chief executive of the Love, Amelia charity, to which the group donates hundreds of handmade items for babies and children each year



- support from Persimmon Homes ensured our no-questions-asked community pantry would be available to those who take part in our Deckham activities for another year
- our Super Quiz winners enjoyed day trips to Ambleside and Grasmere and Stokesley, Helmsley, and Brymor Dairy



### July through September 2024

- BBC Radio Newcastle visited our walking football team to do a feature focusing on the benefits of exercise in later life
- after a successful trial period, we added curling to our Deckham schedule permanently
- Community Foundation North East featured our popular Never Too Old to Rock project





- launched summer financial awareness campaign which included an energy advice and support session, Pension Credit checks, and information about doorstep sellers

## Are you entitled to Pension Credit?

Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit can also help with housing costs such as ground rent or service charges.

You might get extra help if you're a carer, severely disabled, or responsible for a child or young person.

Pension Credit is separate from your State Pension and you may qualify for it even if you have other income, savings, or own your home.



## ENERGY ADVICE & SUPPORT SESSION

From October, gas and electricity prices will rise by 10%. At the same time, around 10 million pensioners will no longer receive winter fuel payments.

Join us to hear from an impartial expert panel about saving energy, understanding your fuel bills, and maximising your income.

After the presentations, there will be a Q&A session with the experts, followed by a chance to speak to them one-to-one.

**Monday, 30 September, 1 - 3 pm**  
**Gateshead 50+ (Deckham)**

Please ring 0191 438 1721 to reserve your place.

## DOORSTEP SELLERS

### How to protect yourself

When someone knocks on your door offering to perform a job or sign you up for a service, it's easy to feel pressured to make a decision on the spot. To avoid uncomfortable situations and protect yourself from scams:

- Display a 'No Cold Callers' sign on at your front door. This should stop salespeople in their tracks. If you choose to answer the door, you can tell the salesperson to leave and not return. If they ignore you, they are committing a criminal offence.
- Don't deal at the door at all. If a salesperson is offering something in which you might be interested, tell them you won't be purchasing or signing up for anything today. Ask them to leave their details, then do some research or speak to a friend or family member before proceeding.
- Know your rights. If you purchase goods or services worth more than £35, the seller must provide you with a written notice giving you the right to cancel within 7 days. If they do not do so, they are committing a criminal offence.
- Know where to go for help. If you find yourself in a sticky situation or need to report a salesperson who has committed an offence, contact Gateshead Fair Trading Service on 0191 433 3987.

**GATESHEAD 50+**

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



Gateshead



Action for Warm Homes

## October through December 2024

- support from the Ringtons Fund (Community Foundation North East) ensured two of our fitness classes would remain free for an additional year and secured an instructor for our art group for a year
- Gateshead Talking Therapies delivery of a three-week sleep quality course at our Deckham hub



**Sleeping too much?  
Not sleeping enough?**

Sleeping too much or not enough can have an impact on your physical and mental health. If you'd like help improving your sleep, sign up for the Gateshead Talking Therapies 3-week sleep course. The course aims to educate you around sleep and useful tips to help aid good sleep.

**FREE 3-week course**

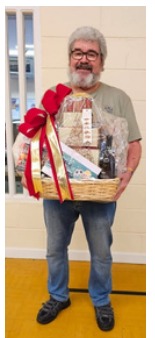
4, 11, and 18 November  
1 - 2 pm  
Gateshead 50+, Deckham

Please note that you must be able to attend all three sessions. To register, please ring 0191 438 1721.



- launch of our Christmas Connections programme, which included a trip to see the pantomime at Little Theatre Gateshead, a Christmas crafts session, our Christmas quiz and ukulele concert, a Christmas raffle, gingerbread decorating, Santa's Workshop gift wrapping sessions, a trip to the cinema, several Christmas meals, and a Never Too Old to Rock performance night at The Three Tuns



## January through March 2025

- added a second weekly session of pickleball to our Deckham schedule due to high demand
- Fraud and Scams Awareness session delivered in partnership with Yorkshire Building Society
- Easter egg drive for Gateshead Food Bank
- Thirty-seven of our beneficiaries enjoyed a day trip to Yarm, Stokesley, and Great Ayton
- Fire Safety talk delivered with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- supported delivery of a free over 50s bootcamp in Ryton
- Financial Wellbeing session delivered in partnership with Yorkshire Building Society



### FINANCIAL WELLBEING SESSION

*Take control of your finances!*

Feeling that you're in control of your finances is important, especially if you're on a fixed income in a time of rising costs. Come along to our session to discover:

- what is meant by financial wellbeing
- factors that may affect you or others
- tips and techniques that can help you manage your money better
- where to go for further support and tools that can help you move forward



**Monday, 10 March**  
1 - 2:30 pm

GATESHEAD 50+  
178 SPLIT CROW ROAD  
DECKHAM NE8 3UB

Ring 0191 438 1721 to  
reserve your place  
by 5 March.



### Fire Safety Talk

Fires can develop and spread quickly, so it's important to be aware of how fires can start and how to make your home as safe as possible. Come along to hear from experts from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

You'll be able to sign up for free Home Safety / Safe & Well checks. The team will visit your home to:

- check for fire risks
- help with smoke alarms
- give you fire safety information and advice
- check for hazards in your home
- provide equipment to help you stay safe at home

**Friday, 28 March**  
12:15 - 1:15  
Gateshead 50+  
Deckham NE8 3UB

Please ring 0191 438 1721 or visit  
the office to reserve your place.

**FREE fire blanket**  
for all attendees



# Why we're here

To understand why it is so important for over 50s in Gateshead to have opportunities to improve their health and maintain their independence, we need to consider the realities of ageing in our borough. Factors such as deprivation, falls, and loneliness significantly affect the wellbeing of older residents.

## Deprivation

Gateshead ranks 47th out of 317 local authorities in England for deprivation, with income deprivation among older people 36.4% higher than the national average. Our wellness hub is located in Deckham, one of the 4% most deprived areas in the country.

Deprivation can drastically affect life expectancy. On average, someone born in one of Gateshead's most deprived areas can expect to live over a decade less than someone born in the most affluent parts of England (15.1 years less for men and 13.9 years less for women).

For many older people, activities that support wellbeing such as fitness classes, cultural events, or short courses are out of reach due to cost. To address this, we provide free or low-cost opportunities for older residents to exercise, socialise, and learn.

## Falls

Emergency admissions due to falls in people aged 65+ are 15% higher in Gateshead than the national average. By 2040, falls among this age group are projected to rise by 25%, with hospital admissions increasing by 34%.

In some Gateshead wards, rates of hip fracture admissions are particularly high when compared to the English average – 64% higher in Bridges, 59% higher in High Fell, and 47% higher in Lobley Hill and Bensham.

Hip fractures can have devastating consequences. More than 30% of older people die within a year, 20% move into a care home, and only 46% return to their previous level of independence. Research from the University of Bristol (2020) suggests that reducing healthcare inequalities in deprived areas could save up to £28.8 million annually in hip fracture treatment costs.



It is therefore essential that evidence-based falls-prevention activities are embedded in the work of organisations supporting older people. Gateshead 50+ is commissioned by Gateshead Council to deliver our Staying Steady falls-prevention programme and we support the delivery of evidence-based Tai Chi and Strength & Balance classes across the borough.

### **Loneliness**

Loneliness is another major challenge. According to a 2020 Brunel University London report, people aged 50+ living in the poorest areas of the country are more likely to experience loneliness. In Gateshead, 34% of people aged 65+ live alone, and in our most recent survey, 45% of our beneficiaries reported living alone.

Loneliness can make people feel vulnerable, increasing their risk of depression and physical health decline. The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing shows that people aged 50+ in poor health are 3.7 times more likely to be often lonely, and those with financial barriers to participation are 2.3 times more likely to experience frequent loneliness.

Our programme creates a sustainable network of local classes and activities for people over 50, helping them form lasting friendships within their communities. By hosting activities in accessible community venues, we reduce travel barriers and enable older residents to attend independently, fostering meaningful social connections that extend beyond the sessions themselves.

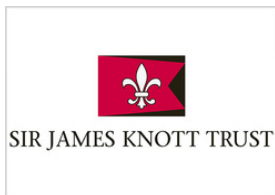


### **The Big Picture**

Our programme is designed to tackle deprivation, prevent falls, and reduce loneliness, helping older residents feel connected and supported. By engaging fully with what we offer, people over 50 can improve their physical health, boost their confidence, reduce depression and anxiety, and ultimately increase their lifespan – all while strengthening their ties to the local community.

# Our Investors

Gateshead 50+ is delighted to have the support of some of the UK's most forward-thinking investors. Thanks to them, we are in a position to be able to respond to our beneficiaries' needs quickly, making an immediate and measurable difference to their quality of life.





178 Split Crow Road  
Deckham  
NE8 3UB

0191 438 1721

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

Registered Charity Number 1155832

*Gateshead 50+ is the working name of Gateshead Older People's Assembly.*