



Spring Update

May 2025

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Introduction

It is now 11 months since we launched Best Years, and as we approach the end of the first year we continue to have a huge impact within our communities.

Following on from our Best Years: The First 6 Months event in December, we have continued to develop and can provide this latest update on what we have achieved and learned.

Best Years improves lives of over 65s in Newark and Sherwood by offering friendship, social connection and support, leading to better mental and physical health and wellbeing.



Community Transport

Accessible transportation to enable participation in community activities.



End of Life Care

Compassionate support for individuals and families.



Befriending

- One to one companionship to combat loneliness
- Listening Line – Telephone Befriending



Enabling Independence

- Advanced Care Planning
- Falls Prevention
- Health Information
- Benefits Advice



Connection & Togetherness

- Activities & Social Engagement
- Digital Inclusion
- Co-production
- Day Trips

Through our Best Years we:

- **Promote independence amongst over 65s in Newark & Sherwood**
- **Enhance quality of life through our comprehensive support**
- **Foster a sense of community and belonging**

Best Years Hubs

A Best Years Hub provides a consistent weekly presence in specific communities across Newark and Sherwood, and comprises of a social activity group and an information drop in. Due to the high demand, Best Years now has 8 hubs across the Newark and Sherwood District which has grown from 4 at the beginning of 2025.

BEST YEARS HUBS



Are you over 65? Join our friendly community and come to one of our Best Years Hubs!

There's so much going on!

Friendship

Health Advice

Seated Exercise

Games & Quizzes

Benefits Advice

Day Trips

Help using your phone or device

Blidworth

In partnership with
Blidworth On The Move

Blidworth Miner's Welfare
Mansfield Rd, Blidworth, NG21 0LR
Group & activities: Monthly
Monday | 12 noon-3pm

Farnsfield

In partnership with
Farnsfield Friendship Group

Farnsfield Methodist Chapel
Chapel Ln, Farnsfield, NG22 8JP
Group & activities: Fortnightly
Friday | 2pm-4pm

Clipstone

Clipston Village Hall
90 Church Rd, Clipstone, NG21 9DL
Every Thursday
Group & activities: 11am-1pm
Drop in support: 1pm-3pm

Newark: Gladstone House

Gladstone House
Lord Hawke Way, Newark, NG24 4FH
Every Friday
Group & activities: 10am - 12noon
Drop in support: 12:30pm-3pm

Collingham

William Bailey House,
Windsor Cl, Collingham, NG23 7PS
Every Wednesday
Drop in support: 12:30pm-1:30pm
Group & activities: 1:30pm-3:30pm

Newark: Hawtonville

Cleveland Sq Community Centre Hawtonville,
Newark, NG24 4HL
Every Wednesday
Group & activities: 10:30am-12:30pm
Drop in support: 12:30pm-3pm

Farndon

Farndon Village Memorial Hall
Marsh Ln, Newark, NG24 3SZ
Every Wednesday
Group & activities: 10:15am - 12:15pm

Southwell

Our Lady of Victories Church Hall Halam Rd,
Southwell, NG25 0AD
Every Tuesday
Group & activities: 1:30pm-3:30pm
Drop in support: 3:30pm-4:30pm

Y^{OUR} CVS

Charity Number: 1212646

Latest News

Listening Line

Launched in March 2025, Listening Line provides individuals with a weekly, friendly, social chat over the phone with a dedicated volunteer.

Listening Line is for individuals aged over 65 who are lonely and/or isolated. We have identified the need through our Best Years hubs and matched people based on common interests and suitability.

We are still recruiting and training volunteers and expect Listening Line to grow over the coming months.



Above: Best Years members from Farndon enjoying seated exercise along to music such as Elvis Presley and the Beatles.

Exercise Classes

Best Years team member Katie is qualified to deliver seated exercise classes which have become a weekly activity within our Farndon and Collingham Groups. Taster sessions with Your Health Notts had proven popular and members were keen to carry on after they finished.

Members at these groups have reported that they have **'felt the difference'** in their strength and balance, they **'miss it'** when they are not able to come, and that they have started doing it **'regularly at home'**.

In addition, Best Years team member Sam has qualified as a Tai Chi instructor and is offering weekly classes to our Hawtonville members.

These classes help promote mindfulness and improve strength, balance and flexibility.

'The seated exercise classes are really popular amongst my friends. I have really felt the difference and am now able to do more at home'

Argent Theatre

Argent Theatre performed in all of our Best Years Hubs in April as part of their 50th Anniversary celebrations.

Our members thoroughly enjoyed the shows which were funny, relatable and perfect for the audience.

we thank Argent Theatre very much for visiting and we hope to see you again soon.

Right: Southwell Best Years members enjoying the show.



Knitting for Charity

Best Years Members from our Farndon Hub recently visited the Children's Bereavement Centre to donate ducks they had knitted as part of a fundraiser.

Proceeds will be used to purchase Hope Bears which will be donated to bereaved children. The members from Farndon really got behind this campaign and were delighted to give their time and skills to such a worthy cause.

Left: Farndon Best Years Members at the Children's Bereavement Centre.

Singing

Clipstone Best Years hub was joined by a professional pianist who played music for our members to sing along to. Singing has proven very popular amongst our groups and we plan to do more of it in the future.

Studies show that singing has many benefits including mental health, cognitive function and social connection.

Right: Clipstone Best Years members enjoy a recent sing along.



Impact

Best Years in Numbers: June 2024 – April 2025

300+ Individual Members
of Best Years Hubs

2961 Total group
attendances

486 Journeys made by
volunteer Door to Door
Drivers

29 Advanced Care Plans
completed

95 Received digital
support at a Best
Years Hub

58 Accessed benefits
advice and Blue Badge
applications support

Helen' Story

Helen joined Best Years in 2024 following a referral from a Social Prescribing Link Worker and a home assessment with a member of the Best Years team. She had recently moved after separating from her partner, and the sudden change in circumstances had impacted her emotional and mental health. Further Deterioration in physical health, weight loss and a lack of energy resulted in a number of falls and reduced confidence.

Helen worried about how she could remain independent and carry on living in her own home. Her GP was supportive and prescribed medication and talking therapies which did help. Helen felt very lonely, did not know her neighbours and lived in a village with very few amenities.

Following a home visit, Helen was collected by a Best Years staff member and was encouraged to make her first step towards change. Walking in to the Hub for the first time was made easier by the welcoming staff and the friendly members of the group.

Helen continues to attend the Best Years Hub each week and has become more involved in activities as her confidence has improved. She has formed friendships with other members of the group and has told her GP that attending the group has contributed to significant improvements to her health and wellbeing.

Helen told us that these are not only her 'best years', they are her '**best, best years**' and she was happy to share her story if it helps others.

Advance Care Plans

Since Autumn 2025, Best Years staff have been supporting members to complete Advance Care Plans which records their future preferences for care, support and medical treatment.

Advance Care Plans have not been offered in a community setting previously, and there was some uncertainty and fear from members about what they were all about. Our trained staff have reassured people and helped to complete them with sensitivity and discretion.

After completing an Advance Care Plan, Best Years members have told us they feel better about their future and are glad to have been asked about what matters to them. Completing Advanced Care Plans in this setting ensures that people are asked whilst they have full capacity and family members and professionals can be properly informed.



Janice

Janice was initially accompanied to Best Years group by a mental health nurse and was only able to stay a short while and would be shaking with worry. She has now settled in and is able to stay longer, talks with other members and recently won a song competition. Janice has told people at her doctors surgery how much she enjoys Best Years and the help it has been.

Quizzes

Quizzes have been popular at Best Years groups from the very start and were initially prepared by staff. More recently, enthusiastic group members have started to prepare and read their own.

Horace from Farndon has been bringing in his own paintings of famous UK landmarks for people to identify, and Gerald from Collingham brings a general knowledge quiz. Both members enjoy sharing their talents and say that it gives them a '**sense of purpose**'.



Names of all Best Years members have been changed to protect the identity of individuals.

Building Blocks of Health

Best Years has become part of people's lives, and the added value which has been created contributes towards the Building Blocks of Health.



Transport

Many of our Best Years members rely on the our transport service to attend groups, and are collected and returned each week by a volunteer driver or staff member. The number using transport does very across the groups and can be higher than 50% for Southwell and Collingham members. Without volunteer drivers the majority of these people would not be able to attend and have told us that it is **'too far to walk'** that **'I have no-one else who can give me a lift'**.

There are Best Years members who make their own way to group, and new friendships have encouraged them to help and support others by offering lifts and pushing wheelchairs. It is wonderful to see this happen amongst members; it can however be impacted by things such as the weather, illness and memory loss. Providing transport is so valuable to Best Years members and is a crucial part of the offer.



Meet Richard – A volunteer driver from Elston



Food

In March we started to introduce fruit snacks to Best Years groups as an alternative to the traditional cake and biscuits which people like to have. After some initial apprehension from members, the fruit has gone down really well and has provided a healthier option during Best Years hubs.

People who live alone have told us that they rarely buy fruit because they are scared of it going to waste, and cutting in to smaller pieces makes it much easier to eat.

Members of our Hawtonville Hub recently completed a 12 week Weight Management course during which they learned about nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

Family, Friends and Communities

For many of our members, Best Years has been a catalyst for new connections and friendships. After meeting at group, Marie and Lorraine from Farndon now meet up for a walk and a coffee every week, and a group of widows have supported each other and become close friends.

We have connected with local Primary Schools who have visited Best Years hubs for choir performances, crafts and activities. The Best Years members love to see younger people at their groups, and the children enjoy listening to the funny stories and have gained a new appreciation for the older generation.

The connections and relationships forged through Best Years groups are developing the wider community and bringing people together outside of the hubs. Renewed confidence has helped people to join other groups, try new activities and travel further a field to have fun and visit friends and family.



Above: Members of Collingham Best Years Hub enjoying the recent sport and games day.

Volunteering

Volunteers are a vital part of Best Years, and people offer their time in various ways such as group support, driving and befriending. We appreciate everything our volunteers do, and Best Years could have developed without them.

Colleen's Story

Colleen is a dedicated volunteer who provides support and companionship to Best Years members and has helped transform the lives of older people in her community. She was inspired by her late father who during his illness had expressed sadness for people who live alone.

Colleen lost her father in 2021 and was heavily involved in caring for him during his illness. She understands the challenges that older individuals face, and had a strong desire to honour her father's memory by helping others. Colleen started to volunteer at the hub and could see from the outset the impact they had on those who came along. People who felt isolated and scared would grow in confidence over time, develop new friendships and restore their sense of belonging.

Best Years hubs are more than just a social occasion, and for many individuals they represent a renewed sense of purpose and inclusion. Colleen describes her volunteering experience as 'one of the most rewarding decisions I have ever made' and has witnessed first hand how simple acts of kindness such as listening, sharing conversation and offering assistance can transform people's lives.

Colleen's volunteering journey is a deeply personal one, and through her ongoing dedication and commitment she has become a vital part of her local community. Her story is a testament to how personal experiences can shape meaningful action and can inspire others who want to make difference to society.



Your CVS is an accredited Volunteer Centre and provides the gold standard in recruitment and support. All of our volunteers have a DBS, and have completed the Volunteer Passport; with many going on to do additional training such as Food Hygiene, Safeguarding, Digital Support and Disability Awareness.

Volunteers are protected by policies and procedures and will be celebrated through events and activities during the upcoming Volunteers Week at the beginning of June.



Best Years Members

Here are some photos and quotes from our Best Years members which demonstrate how much people enjoy being at the groups.

'I love all the different people that come and the different conversations we have'

'Best Years has been really good for my health and happiness'

'I have found other social groups too cliquey, so it is nice to find one that is welcoming and friendly'

'I don't always remember everyone's name, but there are more and more familiar and friendly faces'

Right: Our new Best Years group at Gladstone House listening to our benefits expert Sue.



'I always have the loveliest day on a Wednesday that I actually enjoy the peaceful day at home the next day instead of feeling lost'

'The Collingham Best Years group have a wonderful time and everyone is so happy when they are here'

'I am so grateful for the volunteer drivers as I wouldn't be able to leave the house otherwise'

'It's great to have something to go to. There was nothing in the village before'

Left: More games day action from our Collingham Best Years hub.



Coming Up

Here is a snapshot of some of the exciting activities and events taking place with Best Years over the next few weeks and months:

- **Day Trip to Woodhall Spa**
- **Strength and Balance Classes**
- **VE Day Parties**
- **National Walking Month and Walk Notts Festival**
- **Loneliness Awareness Week**
- **Blood Pressure Testing to be offered at hubs**
- **Garden Centre Trip**
- **Dementia Awareness Training**
- **Notts Care Record – ‘About Me’ to be piloted in Best Years Hubs**



Your Health
Notts



Free Strength and Balance classes

Cleveland Square Community Centre, NG24 4HL
Wednesdays 2pm – 3:30pm
Starting 4th June 2025



Low impact exercises to improve your strength, mobility and stability



Get together for a cuppa and a chat afterwards



Led by friendly, qualified instructors



Book your FREE place today or find out more by calling 0115 772 2515 or speak to your local Best Years Hub



VE DAY CELEBRATIONS

Date:
Wednesday 7th May

Time:
1pm - 4pm

Address:
Bridge Community Centre
Lincoln Rd
Newark
NG24 2DQ



WHAT'S ON?

Join us to celebrate VE Day with a traditional Afternoon Tea and live 1940s music from a talented singer!

Dress to impress in red, white and blue, or come as you are. Everyone welcome!

YOUR CVS

Your CVS | Cotgrave 0115 969 9060 | Edwinstowe 01636 679539
Cotgrave Office: The Cotgrave Hub, Rivermead, Cotgrave, Notts, NG12 3UQ
Edwinstowe Office: High Street, Edwinstowe, Notts, NG21 9PR
Charity Number: 1212646



WALK NOTTS FESTIVAL

Wednesday 28th May
10.15am – 12.15pm
Farndon Village Memorial Hall
Marsh Lane
Newark
NG24 3SZ

Wednesday 28th May
1.30pm – 3.30pm
William Bailey House
Windsor Close
Collingham
NG23 7PS

Friday 23rd May
Vicars Water Country Park
Clipstone
NG21 9AG

COME AND JOIN US

May is National Walking & Wheeling Month and to celebrate we are going on a number of walks with our Best Years members.

Come and join us for fresh air, fun and exercise in your local community.

Everyone welcome and free refreshments provided!

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In Memory of Mike James

The man who named Best Years:

"These are the Best Years of our life if we have the right support"

