

## **Ageing Without Children – Registered Charity No. 1195122**

### **Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 1/4/24 – 31/3/25**

#### **Our Vision and Mission**

Our vision is a world where people without children are enabled to age well.

With the number of older people without adult children set to rise from over 1.2 million to 2 million by 2030 we will see increasing strain on social and care services, and increasing difficulties for those ageing without children in accessing both formal and informal support.

Our mission is therefore to support those who are ageing without children for whatever reason, and to influence health and social care policy to improve their lives.

#### **Governance and Risk**

Trustees who served on the Board of the charity in this period were:

- Jason Bergen – Trustee
- Jenny Collieson – Trustee
- Paul Goulden – Chair

The Board met bi-monthly throughout the period, to manage the activities of the charity and to assess any risk to the organisation.

#### **Activities and Impact**

In 2024 AWOC achieved its 10 year anniversary as an organisation (previously a community interest company).

The focus of the year was on continuing to support the activities of the local AWOC groups in particular around sharing of engagement opportunities, gaining new members and encouraging sign up to the partnership agreement.

During the summer we held a successful recruitment campaign to attract new trustees. This included producing new Trustee and Chair role description(s).

We were active on social media Facebook and X and undertook speaking engagements with local and national groups to further raise the issues of people ageing without children.

#### **Key national activities for the period included:**

- A talk for the AWOC staff group at Ernst and Young (May)
- AWOC East Kent submitted a “manifesto” for the “Change NHS” national consultation and responded to the Change NHS Consultation on behalf of national AWOC
- Developed General Election “Ask” Count Us in July 2024 which led to further discussions with the ONS about “missing data”.

- Kirsty Woodard and Jenny Collieson were interviewed by Dr Lucy Pollock for her book *The Golden Rule: lessons in living from a doctor of ageing* (book published in July with AWOC chapter)
- Paul Goulden had slot talking about AWOC on Tricia Goodard Show (4 August)
- Board agreed to source designer and quotes for new website (Sept) - estimated cost £1200, work commenced January 2025 with Feel Design.
- Developed and ran a well-received national webinar, in partnership with AWOC East Kent and AWOC York, on “Planning for Later Life without Someone You Trust” (Nov. 2024) and started to develop a second webinar on After Death without “Someone You Trust”.
- Robin Hadley submitted a response to the Parliamentary Enquiry Adult Social care : the cost of inaction (Dec)
- Submission to Palliative & End of Life Care Commission (March 2025)

## **Local Groups Key Activities**

### **AWOC York**

Monthly hybrid meetings with speakers continued on a variety of topics. Meeting notes and resources, by both email and post to those not online, continued – now completed 9th year and circulation list has risen to just over 300 AWOCs all over this country and beyond. Steering Group of 3 people led by Sue Lister.

- Website: [www.awocyork.org.uk](http://www.awocyork.org.uk) - Meetings Page includes links to speaker video talks and their slide presentations from a variety of voluntary, public and private sector organisations.
- Participated in a number of Festivals: York International Women’s Week, York Pride, Picnic in the Park, York 50+ Festival; Spark York
- Representation: YOPA (York Older People’s Assembly); York LGBT Forum, Dementia Forward.
- Consultations with AWOC York by individuals and organizations interested in ageing without children issues including York MPs; UCL and York Universities; CYC Anti-Poverty Strategy –
- Supporting ‘Otherhood’ – a play about ageing without children and a variety of other cultural initiatives

### **AWOC Leeds**

AWOC Leeds has three key aims: To provide information sessions for people without family support; To raise awareness with agencies so they take AWOC into account in their offer; To create opportunities for people who are AWOC to meet socially

**Information sessions March 2024 -2025 (peer led and/or with professional input):**

Staying Health and Staying independent, Advanced Planning, Circles of Support.

### **Raising Awareness with agencies:**

- Meeting with the NHS Local Ageing Well team and follow up input from them to the May information session
- Guardian article 'The shrunken state expects families to fill the voids in health and social care. Woe betide those without children'. Sent to the 3 Leeds MPs who are Age UK Age Champions.
- Meeting with Fabian Hamilton MP for East Leeds as he is a designated Age UK Age Champion.
- Deputation to address the whole of Leeds City Council.
- Meeting at HOPS Neighbourhood Network and follow up sessions for them on legal matters
- Meeting Cllr Edwards Guiseley and Rawdon ward following our Deputation. He has championed AWOC with LA officers and other Councillors.
- Age Friendly Leeds meetings. Nominated as Age Friendly Ambassadors

**Social Opportunities:** Regular social meet ups both in the City Centre and in other venues; Twixtmas meet up between Christmas and New Year 2024; 10th Anniversary party for the start of AWOC; Gardening group and reading group set up by members

### **AWOC Dorset**

Held monthly social meet ups in public places mainly in East Dorset and a Zoom Xmas meet up. Signposting (including local Age UK group) and peer support/networking via Facebook. Dorset have 62 members in their Facebook group and several others (numbers not measured) who they communicate with by email.

Dorset Council is adopting AWOC as a strategic priority within Communities for All and has allocated a budget in 2025/26. They will be commissioning a VCSE partner to deliver a pilot programme to generate evidence, build community capacity, and position Dorset as a leader in recognising and supporting those ageing without children.

### **AWOC Gloucester**

Supported by Age UK, Gloucestershire met in person monthly and have covered a variety of topics including legal, home support and repairs, health and social care, benefits and social activities, etc (average attendance 13 members).

The group focused on future planning and because of the information provided in the meetings, many members have organised wills, powers of attorney and Respect forms.

### **AWOC East Kent**

Expanded its Steering Committee Membership from 3 to 5 this year. AWOC East Kent had a successful third year. Key highlights include:

- Ongoing meetings in Canterbury (monthly), Ashford (quarterly), Hythe (quarterly) and online (every other month). New group started in Broadstairs (quarterly) and Thanet. Meetings have included presentations from the NHS, Fire and Ambulance Services, Housing and Home Services, Legal Services and various VCSE projects and organisations.
- Awarded Innovation Champion in the 2024 Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards Partnered with East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust to assist them to develop staff training materials about the challenges faced by patients who are ageing without children.
- Delivered a monthly e-newsletter to AWOCs and stakeholders and increased the newsletter circulation to 271 subscribers.
- Continued membership of East Kent HCP VCSE Alliance, Folkestone & Hythe Health Alliance, FHDC VCSE networking events, Hythe Dementia Awareness Forum and KCHFT East Kent Adult Services Community Engagement group
- Responded to the KCC consultations on “Proposed Changes to Wellbeing Services in the Community” (Jan 2025)

## **AWOC Hastings**

Hastings has continued to be an active participant in the Hastings Ageing Network and affiliated social groups dedicated to older residents of the town. Our team comprises the Chair and Co-chair. We have 25 members on our current email list with an average of 8 attending regular meetings. We encourage members to be active contributors and to co-organise relevant invited speakers to our meetings. We are also happy for members to organise informal social meetings, independently of the Chair.

Our members have initiated their own social meet-ups with four informal meetings this year in a local venue.

- We have invited outside speakers with Q&As on the following:
- Navigating NHS care system with a rare illness and being prepared for hospital stays
- Seniors Helping Seniors. A service run in East Sussex and nationally to provide informal help to older people.
- Local solicitors meeting giving advice on LPOA
- Invited speaker on Advocacy Services tailored for AWOCs
- Financial Inclusion team of East Sussex County Council
- Discussion on Assisted dying in Netherlands, referring to a radio programme
- Follow up Speaker from new service from ESCC Life Transitions. Q&A with group
- Members feedback from a national AWOC webinar “Preparing for Later Life without someone you Trust”
- Advance Decision to Review Treatment in consultation with own GP initiated by a member

- Significant events: Life Transitions event by ESCC attended by a member & reported back.
- My Future Care Handbooks distribution & small group meeting
- East Sussex Older People's annual event 2024: Contribution to the booklet distributed around Sussex and open afternoon to welcome new AWOCs in a local public venue

### **Interactions with other significant people & groups**

- Meeting local Hastings MP Helena Dollimore to introduce our AWOC group
- Continuing links to Hastings Older people's Network

### **AWOC London**

The AWOC London Group was established in October 2024, and since then has been meeting in person monthly at a central London cafe. The group was created with the aim of being a social gathering only. Meetings have generally taken place on the first weekend of each month, alternating between Saturdays and Sundays. Purpose of the London group is to give people a space to chat with others in a social environment, make connections and hopefully develop friendships.

Over the time since we started some group members have also arranged gatherings at other times for events such as cinema trips, exhibitions, music, picnics and summer day trips.

Those who have attended have showed a great level of appreciation that there is such a group, and an organisation, like this and that it is so positive being able to meet people in similar situations, and to also not necessarily focus only on being an AWOC but simply being together and chatting about a whole range of topics.

The group has been a success so far and over the next year aims to continue to grow its membership.

### **Future Activities for AWOC**

The focus of the 2025/26 year will be to:

- Recruit additional trustees and consolidate Board
- Continue to raise the profile of AWOC and seek new partnerships
- Continue to encourage and facilitate local group activity across the UK
- Launch and promote new AWOC website
- Review AWOC organisational strategy and planning

## **Statement of Accounts**

### Cash Income and Expenditure

Opening Balance    £1,094

#### Income

-    Donations    £534

Expenditure        0

Surplus/Deficit    £1,628

Cash and other assets held by the charity at 31/3/25 totalled £1,628.

Incidental administrative expenses were covered by Trustees or volunteers.