

# Voices of the Future: Desktop Review



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Working in partnership with BCP Council

## Executive Summary

This report forms part of the Voices of the Future research project, led by the Trusted Reviewer Team at Community Action Network (CAN) in partnership with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council. It presents findings from a desktop review mapping current services and support for older adults across the BCP area. Aligned with BCP Council's Age Friendly Action Plan (2023-2025), Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy (2025-2030), and the World Health Organization's Age Friendly Communities Framework, the review explores activity across eight domains of positive ageing and highlights examples of good practice. The report draws on local intelligence from statutory, community, and voluntary partners within the BCP Age Friendly Network. Its insights inform the Voices of the Future research (September-November 2025), based on the Five Ways to Wellbeing, to guide future planning, commissioning, and collaboration, supporting BCP's vision of a connected, inclusive, and age-friendly community for all.

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## Introduction

This report forms part of the Voices of the Future research project, an initiative led by the Trusted Reviewer Team at Community Action Network (CAN) in partnership with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council. The Trusted Reviewer project works collaboratively with local residents, partners, and organisations to understand community needs of those aged 60+, improve access to wellbeing support, and strengthen engagement between people and services. As part of this research partnership, the Trusted Reviewer Team has undertaken a desktop review to map existing support for older adults across BCP to identify areas where gaps in service provision may exist. The review supports the ongoing work of BCP Council's Age Friendly Action Plan (2023-2025) and contributes to developing evidence-based recommendations for future service improvement and collaboration. Similarly, the project complements the recent Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy (2025-2030) through identifying early, proactive steps to help people stay healthy and independent for longer. It also draws on the recent State of Ageing in BCP report (2024), which provides a comprehensive picture of ageing locally. Through identifying key challenges, such as health inequalities, housing insecurity, transport accessibility, and digital exclusion, the report provides a rigorous baseline for this review of how older adults experience ageing across BCP.

BCP Council is committed to making the region an age-friendly community where people of all ages can live well, feel connected, and participate fully in local life. Their age-friendly vision prioritises supporting older adults to remain socially active and engaged, while collaborating with partners and local employers to promote inclusive, age-friendly practices. The Ways to Wellbeing Programme illustrates BCP Council's commitment to person-centred, locally delivered activities. Grounded in the Five Ways to Wellbeing (connecting, being active, taking notice, learning, and giving), the programme promotes sustained wellbeing by offering opportunities for social participation, community enterprise development, and the creation of sustainable community hubs and services. The Age-Friendly Network across BCP, which includes representation from BCP Council, and local services and voluntary organisations including Prama, Help & Care, Community Action Network, Public Health Dorset, and U3A, helps to foster collaboration, shared learning, and the identification of best practice. Together, partners are building a unified framework for healthy ageing through shared resources, expertise, and lived experience.

BCP Council's Age Friendly Action Plan (2023–2025) outlines actions aligned with the World Health Organization's Age Friendly Communities Framework (2007), focusing on eight key domains that contribute to positive ageing: (1) Social Participation; (2) Communication and information; (3) Community support and health services; (4) Respect and social inclusions; (5) Transportation; (6) Housing; (7) Civic participation

and employment; (8) Outdoor spaces and buildings. Each domain represents a fundamental component of healthy ageing within the community. The following sections explore the breadth of work being undertaken by BCP Council and local partners to support these domains, highlighting examples of good practice and opportunities to strengthen provision for older adults across the BCP area

## 1. Social Participation

Social participation is strongly connected to good health and wellbeing, particularly in later life. BCP Council recognises that feeling connected and having a sense of belonging is key to maintaining both mental and physical health. The following organisations are working with BCP Council to promote inclusion and social engagement for older adults.

### 1.1. CAN: The Trusted Reviewer Project

Commissioned by BCP Council as part of the Fulfilled Lives Programme, the Trusted Reviewer Project (TRP) supports older adults to access local community groups, social activities, and day opportunities. Its overarching aim is to promote early prevention and wellbeing, ensuring people remain active, healthy, and engaged within their communities. The project offers one-to-one support alongside practical resources, such as the Older People’s Activity Menu, to help individuals find suitable opportunities in their local area. The TRP is complemented by CAN’s Wellbeing Collaborative, where Community Connectors operate information stations, provide a virtual hub of live local information, and offer additional support during hospital discharge to help people reconnect with their communities.



*(The Trusted Reviewer team at their Day Activity Information Fair, where a range of services came together to provide members of the public with information about personal budgets, local activity services, carers support, and lifeline services: <https://can100.org/connecting-communities/trusted-reviewers/> )*

## 1.2. PramaLife Community Groups

PramaLife supports older adults through a wide range of activity and support groups, including special interest clubs and telephone befriending. The organisation works to improve quality of life for older people and their carers, including those living with memory loss and long-term conditions. With 71 groups running across the BCP area, PramaLife supports over 2,000 older adults annually. Prama also focuses on inclusion, supporting people from Jewish, Chinese, and Bengali communities and developing a carers' group for the Armed Forces community. These initiatives aim to increase understanding of the needs of diverse older adults and inform the design of inclusive local services.

## 1.3. Help & Care: Social Prescribing Service

Help & Care empowers individuals and communities to live the independent and fulfilled lives they choose. Their Social Prescribing Service provides one-to-one, person-centred support to connect people, especially older adults experiencing loneliness or isolation, with non-medical opportunities that improve wellbeing. Social Prescribing Link Workers offer tailored 12-week programmes with regular sessions held face-to-face, online, or by phone. This approach helps address the social, emotional, and practical factors affecting wellbeing, enabling people to build resilience and rediscover purpose

## 1.4. Christchurch Community Partnership: Community Connections

Christchurch Community Partnership (CCP) delivers a Community Connections service which provides short-term emotional and practical support, as well as a range of activities including lunch clubs, Sunday roasts, seated exercise classes, and Coffee Connections events at three housing association facilities. These services are led by a Community Connections Coordinator, supported by a team of skilled volunteers. People are typically referred to CCP by adult social care and NHS professionals, as well as relatives. Self-referrals can also be made. Similarly, CCP's Christchurch Angels scheme offers short-term support for those without a social network in times of crisis of illness, while the Helpful Neighbours Services offers one-off practical assistance, such as form-filling or transport to activities, to help people maintain independence and community participation.



*(Image taken from CCP Community Connections webpage, displaying a Coffee Connections group:*

*<https://www.christchurchcommunitypartnership.org.uk/communityconnections> )*

### 1.5. Access Wellbeing: Community Hubs

Access Wellbeing is a partnership between Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust and five charity partners - BCHA, Help & Care, The Lantern Trust, Dorset Mind and Harmony. The Access Wellbeing hubs in Boscombe, Poole, and Weymouth provide welcoming spaces for members of the local community to access support and advice in-person. In addition to the hubs, over 25 Community Drop-Ins operate across Dorset, offering in-person, accessible support. Skilled wellbeing coordinators help individuals navigate support related to mental health, bereavement, financial issues, and volunteering opportunities. These services are particularly valuable for older adults who may struggle with online access.



*(The Access Wellbeing Hub in Poole, where members of the public can access support and advice from skilled professionals through in-person drop-ins:  
<https://www.dorsetaccesswellbeing.co.uk/access-wellbeing-hubs/>)*

### 1.6. BCP Carer Support

BCP Carer Support, formerly known as CRISP, provides vital assistance to unpaid adult carers across the BCP area, helping them navigate the challenges and responsibilities of their caring role. Support is offered through friendly, accessible advice and information, as well as opportunities for carers to connect with others in similar situations, fostering a sense of community and reducing social isolation. The service also offers a range of practical resources and services designed to support carers' wellbeing and resilience. Through its Carers Information Service, BCP Carer Support keeps carers informed about local events, training courses, and relevant initiatives via a free bi-monthly newsletter, ensuring they have access to the knowledge and connections needed to sustain their important role. By supporting carers in these ways, the service contributes not only to their own wellbeing but also to the health and quality of life of the people they care for.

## 2. Communication and Information

Another domain underpinning BCP Council's Age Friendly Action Plan is communication and information. Building on the importance of social participation, this domain recognises that effective communication and access to timely, accurate, and practical information are vital for supporting older adults to age well. Staying connected

with people, events, and services enables older adults to make informed choices, remain independent, and actively participate in their communities.

## 2.1. The Trusted Reviewer Project: Research & Transformation

Through their ongoing research and community engagement, the Trusted Reviewer Team has been exploring how older adults in the BCP area communicate and receive information about opportunities in their local area. Using a person-centred, one-to-one approach, the team supports people in a variety of ways, including meeting in person, over the phone, via email, or by post. This work has generated valuable insights into the most effective communication channels for older adults, helping to identify gaps and improve accessibility.

**Activity options in and around Winton, Charminster and Kinson.** Groups and activities are listed or information only and are not recommended or endorsed in any way by the Trusted Reviewer team. Please note, listings may change or be withdrawn by organisations at short notice.

**Target day/s:** Any

**Full Day Options**

Activity/Provider	Day/Time/Cost	Address and Contact	Area/Distance	Notes
<b>Sutton Road Day Service</b> Our centre is designed to provide care and companionship for older people living with dementia or cognitive issues, particularly those who need assistance or low-level supervision during the day.	Monday 10.00-2.30 £40 which includes transport, or £30 without transport. Lunch included.	Trinity United Reformed Church, Sutton Road, Charminster, BH9 1RN. <b>01202 530530</b> or via email <a href="mailto:enquiries@ageukbped.org.uk">enquiries@ageukbped.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="#">Dementia Day Centre</a>	Charminster	Currently accepting referrals. For clients with low level needs/symptoms as not a securely monitored building and no personal care/medication given.
<b>The Aldbury:</b> Dementia Care Home with a day programme. Colten Care	Days: Mon-Fri 9am-6pm Cost £110 per day including breakfast, lunch and supper. Transport not included	672- 674 Ringwood Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset, BH12 4NA Tel 01202 147641 <a href="#">The Aldbury Dementia Care Home in Poole   Colten Care</a>	Alderney	Info/programme available – contact service.
<b>Filo Day Care</b> Small group day care for older people and those with mild dementia held in people's homes.	Mon-Fri 10.00-4.00 (days tbc) £95.25 per day + VAT (£114.3) Inc. £10 for transport and £5.25 for lunch.	Due to start operating in BCP in February/March 2025. <a href="mailto:info@thefiloproject.co.uk">info@thefiloproject.co.uk</a> <a href="tel:03339398225">0333 939 8225</a> <a href="#">A Filo Day   The Filo Project</a>	Locations in Bournemouth Poole and Christchurch.	Day care for up to 4 people (low support needs) in individual homes. Includes transport, lunch and activities.
<b>Richmondwood Care Home: Day Activities Programme</b>	Mon-Fri 11am-4pm Cost: from £50	<a href="#">Facilities - Richmondwood Residential</a> 19 Richmond Park Avenue, Bournemouth BH8 9DL 01202 511179	Charminster	

*(Snippet of Trusted Reviewer 'Activity Menu' for the Bournemouth area, offering person-centred support and online self-help tools to help older people connect with their local community: <https://can100.org/connecting-communities/trusted-reviewers/>)*

## 2.2. Bournemouth University: Ageing & Dementia Research Centre

Researchers at Bournemouth University's Ageing & Dementia Research Centre have been developing a new digital intervention to support older adults living with frailty and long-term health conditions. This intervention offers a series of digital health coaching sessions designed to help participants manage symptoms, engage more confidently with technology, and access healthcare information from home. By increasing digital literacy and confidence, the programme enables older people to take a more active role in their own health and wellbeing, reducing unnecessary clinic visits and helping them live independently for longer. This initiative reflects a

growing emphasis on digital inclusion and the role of technology in supporting health management among older adults.

### 2.3. Prama: Cross-sector Awareness

Prama has continued to work closely with statutory, private, and voluntary sector partners to ensure that older adults who are not confident using technology are not excluded from vital information and services. They have made significant efforts to maintain multiple communication formats, including printed materials, telephone contact, and in-person engagement. Prama's approach demonstrates that while digital tools are valuable for many, accessible non-digital information remains essential for ensuring that everyone, particularly those living with cognitive or sensory impairments, can access the support they need.

### 2.4. BCP Council: Age Friendly Communities Team

The Age Friendly Communities Team at BCP Council has been reviewing national examples of best practice to improve how information and communication are delivered across the BCP area. This work includes assessing existing internal and external communication guidelines, identifying areas for improvement, and developing new guidance to promote age-friendly communication principles. The team is also working with partners and older adults to co-produce better ways of sharing information about available services and opportunities. They are active members of the BCP Digital Inclusion Working Group, which seeks to reduce digital barriers and promote equal access to online information and services. In addition, the recent Elderfest event in Christchurch provided over 300 older adults the opportunity to learn about care and support services in-person.

## 3. Community Support and Health Services

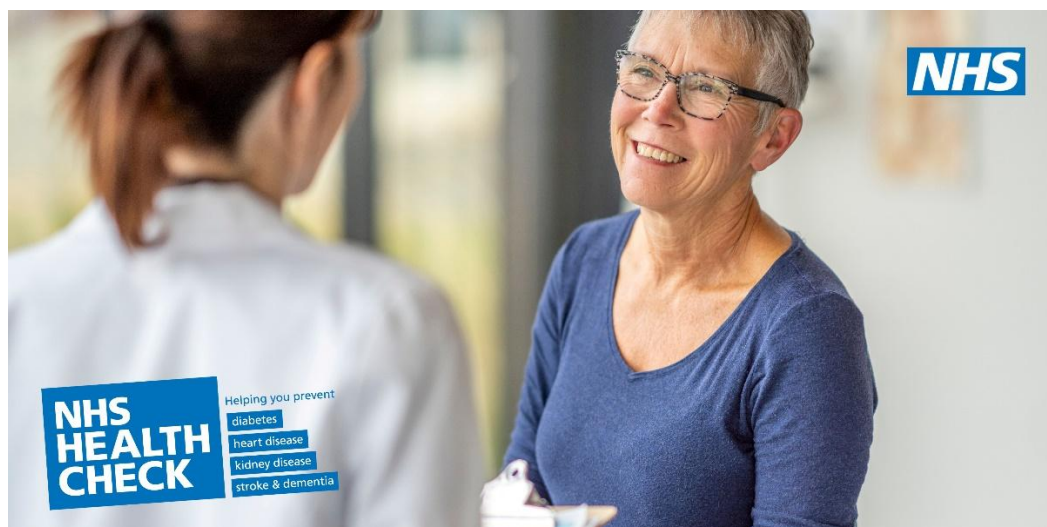
BCP Council recognises that community support is strongly connected to good health and wellbeing throughout life, alongside accessible and affordable health care services. Both of these are crucial for maintaining health and independence as people age. The following section outlines how services in the BCP area are supporting older adults to access community support and health services.

### 3.1. Help & Care: Health & Wellbeing Coaching

Help & Care's Health & Wellbeing Coaching offers people, including older adults, personalised support to build confidence and navigate steps toward a healthier, happier life. Coaches are able to support people to feel more confident and in control of their health through weekly or fortnightly face-to-face, over the phone, or video call sessions. The service is particularly beneficial for older adults adjusting to a new health diagnosis, struggling with anxiety, or simply feeling overwhelmed.

### 3.2. LiveWell Dorset: Community Health Checks and Wellbeing Coaching

LiveWell Dorset is a free health and wellbeing service to support positive lifestyle changes. The service offers telephone coaching and online tools to help people, including older adults across the BCP area, to get more active, lose weight, quit smoking, or reduce alcohol consumption. In addition to coaching, LiveWell Dorset delivers targeted and free NHS Health Checks for individuals aged 40–74. These checks identify early signs of preventable conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, or type 2 diabetes. The service also signposts participants to local groups, community opportunities, and self-help resources, reinforcing the link between physical health and community engagement.



(LiveWell Dorset’s NHS Health Check offer: <https://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/healthcare-professionals/nhs-health-checks/>)

### 3.3. Access to Food Partnership

The Access to Food Partnership brings together BCP Council, Public Health Dorset, and a network of community and voluntary sector organisations to improve food access and reduce inequality. Partner services include Bournemouth Foodbank, Poole Pantry, Feed Our Community, Townsend Community Fridge, and Branksome and Rossmore Community Fridges. These services support older adults and families who may be struggling with access to affordable, nutritious food. Beyond emergency food provision, the partnership promotes healthy eating, offers training and upskilling opportunities, and encourages sustainable food practices to reduce waste and improve wellbeing across the community.

## 4. Respect and Social Inclusion

An age-friendly community values the contributions of all its members and ensures everyone, regardless of background, health, or circumstance, is treated with dignity and respect. BCP Council's Age Friendly Action Plan emphasises the importance of creating inclusive environments that empower people to remain active participants in community life. The following organisations exemplify inclusive practice and promote understanding, respect, and connection across the BCP area.

### 4.1. Help & Care: Memory Support & Advice Service

Help & Care's memory support & advice service offers support for people before, during, and after a diagnosis of dementia, memory concerns, and/ or cognitive changes. A team of dedicated advisors can help to answer questions and ease anxieties while awaiting assessments, explain conditions and choices after a diagnosis, and provide personalised information, advice, and guidance on daily living, treatments, and local resources. They also provide holistic support for families and carers, recognising how dementia can affect the whole circle of care.

### 4.2. Prama: Memory Lane Groups

PramaLife offers dedicated support for people living with dementia and memory loss, as well as for their carers, through its Memory Lane social and activity groups. Each session is carefully themed, providing opportunities for participants to reflect on and share memories, fostering meaningful conversation and social connection. Activities include interactive games, music, sensory experiences, and refreshments, all designed to create an engaging, supportive, and inclusive environment. The groups are hosted in a variety of accessible, community-based venues across the BCP area and run on a regular basis, helping to establish routine, reduce social isolation, and enhance emotional wellbeing. By combining social interaction, cognitive stimulation, and carer support, PramaLife's Memory Lane Groups contribute significantly to promoting respect, dignity, and social inclusion for older adults and their families.

### 4.3. The FILO Project

The Filo Project is an award-winning not-for-profit organisation providing small-group day-care sessions for people with early to moderate dementia, as well as for older adults facing conditions such as stroke, Parkinson's and sensory loss. Operating across the BCP area, the service offers a warm, engaging environment where individuals are valued, friendships can flourish, and social isolation is reduced. Through its inclusive design and welcoming group support model, it helps ensure that older adults in the BCP region remain connected, respected, included and able to participate fully in community life.



(Image taken from the FILO Project webpage: <https://www.thefiloproject.co.uk/>)

#### 4.4. CAN: Ethnically Diverse Communities Project

CAN's Ethnically Diverse Communities (EDC) Project offers support for older adults from diverse communities. The project aims to build capacity across BCP community groups from ethnically diverse backgrounds through offering dedicated support to strengthen their infrastructure and identify their strengths and needs. The team provide both in-person and online support, with a range of useful resources on their webpage. This work helps ensure that the experiences and voices of older adults from ethnic minority backgrounds are represented in the design and delivery of community services, contributing to a more equitable and respectful local system.

#### 4.5. Digital Skills Hub

Many older adults face barriers in engaging with digital technology, which can limit their access to vital information, social opportunities, and services. To address this, the Digital Skills Hub in Boscombe offers free workshops and masterclasses help to navigate computers, smartphones, and the internet safely and confidently. The Hub works closely with local partners to ensure accessibility for older adults who may be new to digital devices or who require a more supported, one-to-one learning approach. Its friendly environment and flexible learning opportunities make it particularly valuable for older residents seeking to stay connected and engaged in an increasingly digital world.

#### 4.6. Bournemouth Churches Housing Association: Learn

Complementing the Digital Skills Hub, BCHA Learn provides structured Digital Discovery Courses for residents across Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole. These courses, offered in collaboration with the Digital Skills Hub, support individuals to develop essential computer and internet skills at both beginner and intermediate levels. Topics include using email, navigating the internet, online safety, and using digital communication tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. The approach is tailored to meet individual learning needs, providing reassurance and encouragement to those who may feel less confident using technology. By building digital literacy and reducing isolation, BCHA Learn’s programmes empower older adults to engage more fully with their communities, access online resources, and maintain independence through technology.



(Image taken from BCHA Learn webpage: <https://www.bcha.org.uk/our-services/bcha-learn/bcha-learn-courses/>)

#### 4.7. Digital Support in Libraries

BCP Council’s libraries play an important role in promoting digital inclusion and supporting older adults to stay connected with information, services, and their communities. Through the Learn Computer and IT Skills at Your Library initiative, libraries across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole offer free access to computers and Wi-Fi, alongside friendly assistance from library staff. Volunteer-led Tech Buddy sessions provide drop-in opportunities for people to get help using computers, tablets, and smartphones, with additional one-to-one appointments available. These sessions help older residents build confidence in using digital devices and online tools, ensuring that those who may be less familiar with technology can still benefit from digital resources.

#### 4.8. Dorset Mental Health Forum: Social Connection Programme

The Forum's Social Connection initiative recognises that isolation and loneliness are particularly challenging when individuals are experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties. Through a blend of peer-led sports, outdoor walking and gardening groups, 1-to-1 connection, and partnerships with existing community-based activities, the Forum works to remove barriers and foster a sense of inclusion and dignity. By delivering this work, the Forum ensure that older adults, regardless of mental health status, background, or circumstance, are valued, supported and able to participate fully in their communities.

## 5. Transportation

Accessible and affordable transportation plays a crucial role in enabling older adults to maintain independence, access essential services, and participate in community life. Limited or unreliable transport options can lead to isolation, reduced wellbeing, and exclusion from local opportunities. BCP is fairly connected area, situated in a more urban area of Dorset with good road connections and public transport links. However, many older adults require additional support to access suitable transport. The following examples demonstrate how transport support across the BCP area is helping to address these challenges.

### 5.1. South East Dorset Community Accessible Transport

Across the BCP area, SEDCAT provides a range of transport options for people who struggle to travel independently due to mobility challenges, disability, or health conditions. Their Community Car Scheme uses volunteer drivers to take people to medical appointments, shopping trips, or social events, ensuring affordable and accessible travel. The organisation also runs a wheelchair-accessible minibus service, offering regular routes to town centres and supermarkets, and provides mobility scooters and wheelchairs for hire. These services help older adults remain independent, socially connected, and active participants in community life.



(Image from SEDCAT webpage displaying how their transport service can support social outings for older adults: <https://www.sedcat.org.uk/the-accessible-transport-bus> )

## 5.2. BCP Council: Older Person's Bus Pass

BCP Council have continued to support older people's access to transport through providing an older person's bus pass. The pass allows older individuals to travel on local buses in England for free during off-peak hours (9:30am - 11pm, Monday - Friday and all day on weekends and bank holidays). Older adults can apply for the bus pass if they have reached the state pension age and are a permanent resident of the BCP area. Accessibility to reliable and affordable transport helps older adults remain independent, attend social activities, access services, and avoid isolation. The bus pass supports their ongoing participation in community life, reduces the risk of exclusion caused by transport-limitations, and enables greater freedom and choice in daily living.

## 5.3. Christchurch Community Partnership: Transport Services

Christchurch Community Partnership (CCP) offers a range of community transport services designed to help older adults stay connected. Their Dial-a-Bus scheme provides a door-to-door minibus service for those unable to use standard public transport, supporting access to lunch clubs, social events, and shopping trips. CCP's Neighbour Cars service operates in a similar way, with volunteer drivers using their own vehicles to provide personalised assistance for journeys to appointments or community activities. These services, supported by volunteer 'bus buddies', play a vital role in reducing isolation and maintaining social participation for older adults.



(Image taken from CCP transport webpage:  
<https://www.christchurchcommunitypartnership.org.uk/transport> )

## 6. Housing

Safe, accessible, and good-quality housing is essential to supporting physical and mental wellbeing, maintaining independence, and fostering a sense of community as people age. BCP Council recognises that suitable housing enables older adults to live comfortably, securely, and with dignity within the communities of their choice. The following services illustrate how organisations across the BCP area are contributing to this goal by improving housing options and support for older adults.

### 6.1. BCP Council: Supportive Living Framework

BCP Council is developing a Supportive Living Framework designed to give people, including older adults, greater choice and flexibility over where and how they live. Engagement sessions with partners have helped shape this approach, ensuring that accommodation options are person-centred, adaptable, and responsive to different levels of support need. The framework draws on BCP’s existing supported living, sheltered housing, and extra care housing services, which together help older adults live independently for as long as possible. Support ranges from a few hours a week to 24-hour care, enabling residents to manage their homes and finances, participate in learning or volunteering, and remain active in the community

### 6.2. Housing Associations’ Charitable Trust

Operating nationally and within BCP, the Housing Associations’ Charitable Trust (HACT) works with housing providers to maximise the social impact of housing and strengthen connections between housing, health, and social care sectors. Within the BCP area, HACT supports housing associations to deliver community-led

initiatives that improve wellbeing and reduce inequality. In 2024, HACT launched its Green Skills Project in BCP, in partnership with local housing associations, councils, training providers, and employment networks. The initiative promotes sustainability and workforce development within the housing sector, helping to ensure that homes and communities are environmentally responsible, inclusive, and future-ready. This work highlights how housing can serve as both a place of stability and a foundation for community growth.

### 6.3. Bournemouth Churches Housing Association: Home

BCHA is a leading charitable housing association supporting individuals and families across the South West and South of England. Managing more than 1,300 properties, BCHA provides a wide range of housing, support, and learning services for people at risk of homelessness or social exclusion. Their mission is to empower people to build better lives by providing stable housing, practical support, and opportunities to learn and grow. In BCP, BCHA's services include tenancy support, financial guidance, repairs and maintenance, and advice on managing anti-social behaviour. Their Asset Management Strategy and tenant satisfaction initiatives ensure that properties remain safe, well-maintained, and responsive to residents' needs. By providing affordable homes and wraparound support, BCHA plays a crucial role in enabling older adults and vulnerable individuals to live independently and securely within their local communities.



(Image taken from BCHA Home webpage: <https://www.bcha.org.uk/our-services/bcha-home/bcha-home-my-tenancy/>)

### 6.4. BCP: Handyvan Service

The BCP Handyvan Service, commissioned by BCP Council, provides a vital home-maintenance and minor repair service to help older adults remain safe and

independent at home. The service covers a wide range, such as fitting grab rails, changing light bulbs, installing locks and door chains, replacing smoke detector batteries, moving small furniture, or repairing fences and pathways. Labour is provided free of charge, with users only paying for the cost of materials. By reducing home hazards, supporting essential maintenance, and preventing avoidable accidents such as falls, the Handyvan Service directly supports the ‘ageing in place’ agenda by helping older adults remain in their homes safely for longer.

#### 6.5. Ridgewater Energy

Ridgewater Energy delivers expert advice and practical solutions in energy efficiency, insulation, and fuel poverty reduction across the BCP and Dorset area. The organisation provides accessible advice on energy and money saving, ventilation and damp prevention, and maintaining a warm, healthy home, as well as partnering with a range of local and national schemes to deliver free or subsidised improvements for eligible households. These initiatives directly benefit older adults by reducing fuel bills, improving home comfort, and minimising health risks associated with cold or damp housing conditions.



(Image taken from Ridgewater Energy webpage: <https://ridgewaterenergy.co.uk/projects-and-services/healthy-homes-dorset/>)

## 7. Civic participation and employment

BCP Council recognises that Age Friendly Communities must provide options for people in later life to continue to contribute to their communities. This can include paid employment or voluntary work and being engaged in the political process. The following sectors outlines ways in which BCP are achieving this domain.

### 7.1. BCP Council: Employment and Inclusion Initiatives

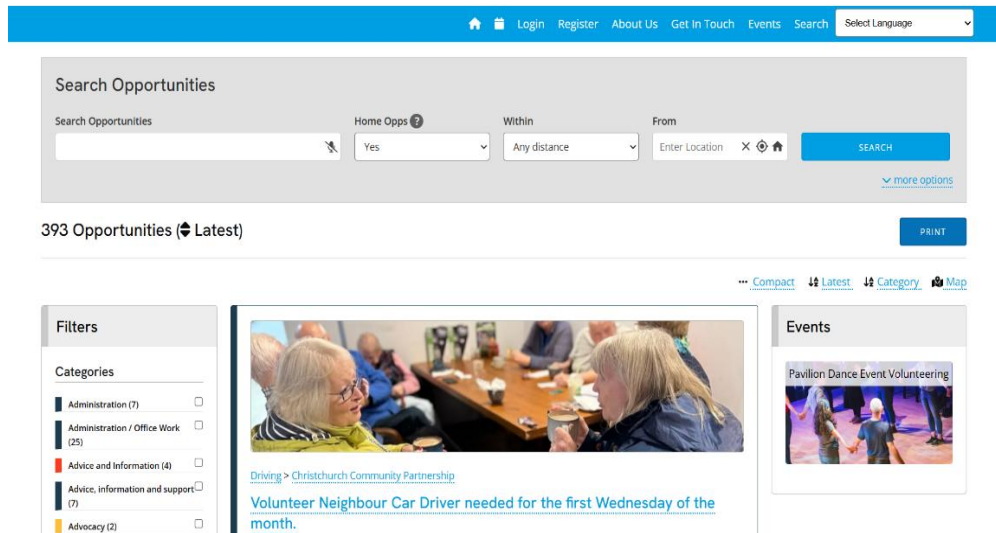
BCP Council actively promote opportunities for older adults to enter, remain in, or return to the workforce. Guidance for employers highlights the benefits of retaining older workers' skills and experience, while resources for individuals provide advice on flexible working, upskilling, and transitioning towards retirement. The Council has also appointed a Business Champion for Older Workers, aligned with the Government's strategy to support employers in becoming more age friendly. These efforts aim to ensure that the valuable expertise of older workers is recognised, and that inclusive employment practices remain embedded across the local economy. Beyond employment, BCP Council also encourages older residents to engage with local decision-making processes through consultations, public forums, and the Age Friendly Network, helping to ensure that older adults' voices continue to shape local policy and community development.

### 7.2. Prama: Dementia Awareness Training

PramaLife offers Dementia Awareness Training sessions for organisations, community groups, churches, and carers across BCP. The sessions promote greater understanding of dementia and the challenges it presents, while sharing practical tools to support inclusion and accessibility for people living with the condition. The training covers the progression of dementia, the emotional and practical effects on individuals and carers, and local services available for support. For workplaces, particularly those employing or serving older adults, these sessions help create more dementia-friendly environments and allowing people to continue contributing to community life and employment for longer.

### 7.3. CAN: Volunteering Support

CAN offers individuals, including older adults, support to engage with a range of volunteering opportunities. The service encourages individuals to get involved with volunteering opportunities such as gardening, befriending, or events to gain new skills and develop self-confidence. Interested individuals can complete a short enquiry form where a member of the team will help them to find their ideal role or browse the online volunteer hub to see what is available. Additionally, twice a year they hold a Volunteer Fair for people to find out about voluntary roles and learn more in-person, with attendance from a range of local charities in the BCP area. Through volunteering, many older adults report increased self-confidence, new friendships, and a stronger sense of belonging, factors that are all central to ageing well and maintaining a sense of purpose in later life.



(Snippet of CAN's Volunteering Hub, providing online access to volunteering opportunities:  
<https://volunteer.can100.org/volunteers/search> )

## 8. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

The quality of outdoor spaces and public buildings has a significant impact on mobility, independence, and wellbeing in later life. Walkable streets, accessible buildings, well-maintained parks, and safe environments encourage older adults to remain active and connected. BCP Council's Age Friendly Action Plan acknowledges that outdoor environments must be inclusive and welcoming for all ages and abilities.

### 8.1. The Parks Foundation

The Parks Foundation delivers a variety of nature-based projects designed to enhance wellbeing and improve the accessibility of green spaces across Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole. Their flagship programme, Parks in Mind, offers outdoor volunteering sessions, gentle gardening, and conservation activities in local parks and open spaces. These activities provide physical, social, and mental health benefits, particularly for older adults who may be at risk of isolation. Other initiatives such as Nature Neighbourhoods, GreenFingers Groups, and the Green Heart Parks project aim to strengthen community engagement with nature, promote sustainability, and increase access to outdoor spaces for all. Collectively, these projects ensure that local parks remain inclusive and age-friendly environments.



*(Image taken from the Parks Foundation webpage, displaying the GreenFingers community project at Pelhams Park: <https://parksfoundation.org.uk/events/> )*

## 8.2. Bournemouth Town Centre

The Bournemouth Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID), in partnership with BCP Council and the Centre for Ageing Better, is leading a series of initiatives to make the town centre more welcoming and accessible for people over 55. The project includes the creation of a Business Charter encouraging local retailers and service providers to adopt age-friendly practices, alongside staff training, improved signage, additional seating, and grant funding to support accessibility improvements. By addressing physical barriers and promoting awareness of older adults' needs, the BID is helping transform Bournemouth Town Centre into an inclusive, intergenerational space that supports social participation and community cohesion.

## 8.3. BCP Council: Seafront Accessibility and Support

BCP Council provides a range of services to ensure that the region's award-winning beaches and seafronts remain accessible to all. Beach wheelchairs are available to loan from Bournemouth, Boscombe, and Sandbanks beach offices, equipped with balloon tyres for easy movement on sand. Accessibility is further enhanced by mobility mats at Boscombe Beach and a wooden boardwalk at Sandbanks, allowing wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility to access the shoreline safely. The Council has also introduced fully accessible beach huts at Boscombe, as well as accessible toilets across all public beaches and promenades. These initiatives exemplify how thoughtful design and investment in outdoor spaces can support inclusion, wellbeing, and enjoyment for older residents and visitors alike.

## Conclusion

This review has highlighted a range of initiatives across the BCP area that contribute to making the community more age-friendly. While formal programmes and services are essential, it is equally important to recognise the impact of informal networks. Communities and individuals supporting their neighbours, as well as grassroots neighbourhood initiatives that cannot always be captured in a review like this, play a vital role in promoting older people's happiness and wellbeing. Families and unpaid carers also provide invaluable support, often enabling older adults to remain active, connected, and engaged in daily life. Similarly, faith-based organisations and networks make a significant contribution, offering both practical assistance and a strong sense of belonging, support, and opportunities for social connection that help reduce loneliness and isolation among older people. However, insights from the State of Ageing in BCP report (2024) reinforce the importance of exploring how older people experience community services and initiatives. With 41% of residents aged 50+ and an increasing prevalence of frailty, dementia, and housing challenges, the need for inclusive, accessible services is clear.

Taking all of this into consideration and drawing on the intelligence held by CAN around community services and groups, the forthcoming Voices of the Future research project (September - November 2025) will build on the findings of this desktop review to identify gaps in provision, highlight opportunities for stronger collaboration, and capture emerging needs within local communities and the wider BCP area. Grounded in the Five Ways to Wellbeing framework, this next stage of the project will complement BCP Council's Age Friendly Action Plan (2023-2025) and the wider work of the WHO Age-Friendly Network, strengthening the shared commitment to creating a community where people of all ages can live well, stay connected, and participate fully in local life. The research will provide further local insight to enrich the overall picture, support evidence-based planning and commissioning, and help ensure that BCP continues to develop as an inclusive, age-friendly place for everyone.

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