

# Connecting older people in communities that care

## Impact report 2016









# Introduction

MHA wants to tackle loneliness and isolation among older people by connecting them in communities that care.



## How we're making later life better.

MHA has provided housing and support services to older people for over 70 years. But for me, that's only one half of the story. In reality what we, as a charity, strive to do is create communities that care for older people and support them throughout their later life.

It is the actions of carers, volunteers, music therapists, chaplains and relatives, all linked up as part of caring communities, that makes the difference and allows us to have a genuine impact.

Sometimes the impact is through music therapy sessions, designed to help relieve symptoms of dementia. Sometimes it is through our befriending scheme, which ensures people living alone have someone to talk and socialise with. And sometimes, it's through the many events and outings we hold, which simply bring inclusion and enjoyment.

The reason we do all of these things, and why we believe they're an absolutely critical part of the communities we create, is to help eliminate loneliness and isolation among older people.

We want later life for everyone to be an enjoyable period in which people can contribute to, and gain from, society and communities.

By listening to the people we serve, we know that later life can be a challenging time, particularly for those with ill-health, who have been widowed or live alone, and for many other reasons. Often, it can also be a time in which people feel isolated and apart from the rest of society.

We will continue to do all we can to make sure that people can enjoy later life and that's what our many colleagues and volunteers work hard to achieve. They do so with compassion and respect, professionalism and care.

That's why in the last year, we've made real progress towards this future. We're working with 1,000 more older people than last year, have raised more money, and thanks to an efficiency drive, have spent a greater proportion of our income directly on supporting communities.

This Impact Statement sets out where our money comes from, where that money goes, and – most importantly – the impact it has on the people we work with every day.

**Adrian Bagg**  
Chief Executive

"We have an ambition that every older person can be connected within a community of their choice"

Dame Denise Platt, *MHA Patron*

# MHA at a glance

MHA is a charity providing care, accommodation and support services to more than 17,000 older people across the UK. We have more than 70 years' experience in creating communities that care and developing high standards and quality across all we do.

## Who we are

A large part of our organisation is focused on providing physical housing, including residential care homes and retirement living. Additionally, we provide a range of specialist care in our care homes, often to people with dementia or other specific needs.

However, what we do extends well beyond bricks and mortar. We pride ourselves on creating communities, both within our homes and residences, through a range of support services and schemes. That includes 10,000 people around the UK supported through 66 Live at Home services in their neighbourhood.

**We want to tackle loneliness and isolation among older people by connecting them in communities that care.**

We are one of the most well-respected care providers in the sector, with a real focus on personalised care as well as one of the largest charities in the UK. Importantly, we don't just work

with our residents – we build connections with their families, and their wider community, as we believe that's important in helping our residents live happily in later life.

We pride ourselves on being inclusive and are open to all older people in need, irrespective of their beliefs. Our homes and schemes are diverse communities, and residents can develop and practise their own faith or none at all as they feel appropriate.

We make sure the care and services we provide for our residents and members is of the highest standard possible as we are always continuously striving to be the best we can. Our 2016 independent Your Care Rating survey rating showed we maintained our 97% overall satisfaction score by our care home residents. In addition, our music therapy service won the 2015 Laing Buisson Excellence in Dementia Care Award.



**10,000**

older people supported in their own home thanks to **66** Live at Home schemes



**4,350**

people living in **84** care homes



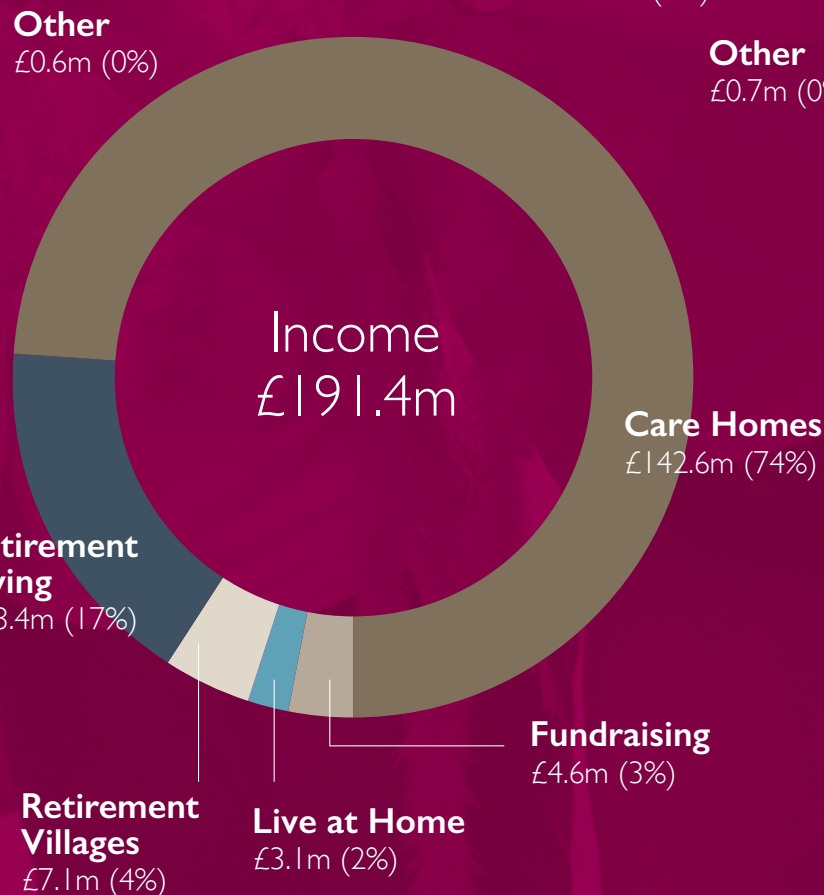
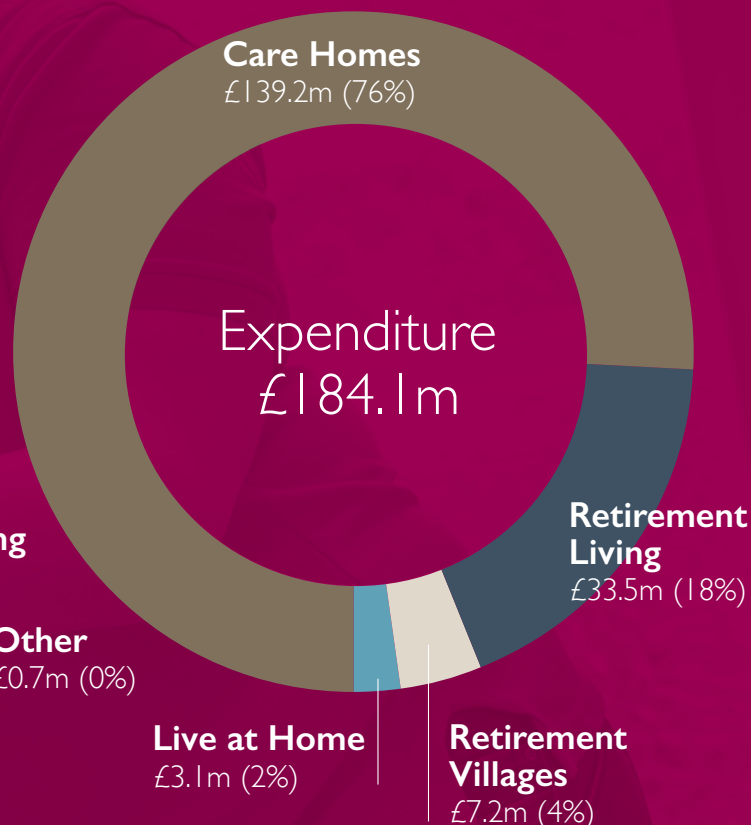
## Some of our highlights in numbers

**Over 17,000 older people supported in our homes and communities including:**

# MHA's values

Our values underpin our entire approach:

- We respect every person as a unique individual
- We treat others, especially the most frail and vulnerable, with the dignity we wish for ourselves
- We are open and fair in all our dealings
- We always seek to improve, to become the best we can be
- We nurture each person's body, mind and spirit to promote a fulfilled life



MHA is a charity governed by a voluntary board. Because we don't have shareholders, we invest every penny of our surplus into maintaining and developing new services for the benefit of older people.



# Live at Home



## 10,000

older people supported  
by 66 community-based  
Live at Home schemes

We want living in your own home in later life to be a positive experience where people remain independent and happily connected with their local community.

## Creating communities for those in their own home

Our Live at Home community-based schemes work to make sure people don't become isolated or lonely in their own home.

That's why for more than 25 years, we have provided services for people aged over 60 who are living in their own home, but who wish to have a little more support.

These Live at Home services include befriending, exercise and fitness activities, trips out and lunch clubs – all intended to build communities and friendship, promote and foster independence, and help prevent isolation and loneliness.

### Helping tackle loneliness at home

Joan Wilson started visiting Horsforth Live at Home scheme in Leeds along with husband Eddie. Sadly, Eddie died 19 years ago but Joan (87) continued to be a member.

She said: "The scheme was very good to me when Eddie passed away. I'd be very lonely if I didn't come here. I cope ok on my own so don't want to live in a care home as I'd feel my independence would be taken away.

"Live at Home activities allow me to live at home and keep my independence. I just love to sit and natter with others. The company is great. The biggest challenge to living at home alone is the loneliness. You can really make strong friendships here."



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Joan Wilson



## 2,300

volunteers support our  
Live at Home schemes





“Annie supports me as much as I support her – it’s a true friendship and brings us both joy.”

Hope, Befriending volunteer



## The importance of friendship

Our befriending scheme is vital for those people who are unable to leave their home and participate in the wider range of activities and services available.

They include people like Annie, who was struggling to reconnect with life after an illness. Annie was partnered with Hope, who visits her regularly sometimes to talk over a cup of tea, or at other times to take Annie to the cinema, or shopping.

Annie feels she now has a much better quality of life: “Spending time with Hope has really helped me get back to normal life. I’m able to talk openly about anything on my mind, which is wonderful when living alone. Ultimately helps me feel safer.”

It’s not a one-way relationship, as Hope explained: “I get lots out of my time with Annie. I don’t have older family members nearby, so I benefit from Annie’s experience and I love talking to her. Annie supports me as much as I support her – it’s a true friendship and brings us both joy.”

The befriending scheme is intended to provide a genuine, long-lasting friendship between both people.

We carefully ensure we match people we believe will form a positive and beneficial connection with each other, and examples like Annie and Hope show how much that matters.



£40 supports a ‘Live at Home’ member for a whole month with a range of services

# Music Therapy



# 450

In the last year, around 450 residents in 54 of our homes benefitted from music therapy. We'd like to turn that into over 1,900 residents by 2025.

We have provided music therapy since 2008, thanks to a growing group of specialist music therapists. The service is provided free of charge to residents and is fully funded by fundraised income thanks to our supporters.

## The therapeutic power of music

Our award-winning therapists work with groups of residents, or in tailored individual sessions, and plan each session according to the often very specific needs of the resident(s) involved.

We've found music therapy can help reduce anxiety, improve self-esteem, help residents feel a sense of inclusion, and in some cases can even contribute to a reduction in medication required.

Residents can take part in music therapy regardless of whether they are musically-skilled, or picking up an instrument for the first time.

Families play an important part too – music therapists will often ask residents' friends and loved ones about the residents' favourite songs, or musical tastes. They'll also be shown clips of the sessions, enabling them to see their loved one being able, and present in the moment.

We believe a huge amount more can be achieved through music therapy. However more research needs to be done to evidence this and help create the case for increased funding and resources within MHA and beyond. In the next year, we will embark on a new, large-scale research project with Anglia Ruskin and Nottingham universities to prove the benefits of music therapy in dementia care.



**£30 could provide an individual music therapy session, giving someone with dementia the opportunity to express their feelings**

## It's as though music can break through

David's case is just one example of the benefits of music therapy. Previously a dance teacher and professional jazz drummer, David's life was full of music before the onset of dementia. He was a keen ballroom dancer and met his wife, Margaret, through dancing. Yet as his dementia progressed, his memory for dancing was lost.

Once MHA music therapist Alison Hughes began working with David, he soon reconnected with music. Alison says: "Immediately upon starting our first session, David engaged with the music, tapping along to the songs I played."

"Margaret brought in his snare drum for us to use, and his eyes lit up when he saw it."

"Now, we make music together, and David is motivated and participates actively. He plays spontaneously, clearly and sharply. He may not know my name, but recognises that when I am with him, there will be music. I have seen a clear improvement in his level of engagement and overall wellbeing, even though his condition itself may not be improving. I feel privileged to work with him."

Margaret says she can see the impact that music therapy has on David. "When he began his sessions, it was as though the old David was back," she says. "His 'music face' returned and it's as though music is able to breakthrough, where other things cannot."





## Many care home providers have music in their homes which residents enjoy.

But music therapy differs from sing-along or listening to music on headphones. In music therapy sessions, therapists directly interact with our residents through live joint music making as well as the exchange of verbal, facial, vocal and bodily expressions. It is through this interaction that music therapists can regulate residents' emotions to alleviate symptoms of dementia and identify possible causes of symptoms.

Additionally, during the sessions and interactions, music therapists observe residents' remaining cognitive functions. The feedback from music therapists can help other health professionals make decisions on care and medication and to continue managing symptoms in day-to-day life.



## Silvie's face brightens when she's taking part

The benefits of music therapy are clear when it comes to Silvie, who began her music therapy journey with group sessions. After a decline in her dementia, however, she became less mobile and now has the sessions one-to-one in her own room. The sessions are designed to fit around Sylvie; they are person-centred. Even though her ability to walk is limited, Silvie responds physically to the beat of the music, through other movements and in her expressions.

Her friend Phoebe has noticed a real impact: "Silvie's face brightens when she's taking part in music therapy and she is more engaged than outside the sessions. She has a great rapport with her therapist and it's become an important part of her life."

Music therapist Alison said: "Dementia can often cause someone to become isolated and low at times, but music therapy seems to help tackle that for Silvie. I see her personality coming out when we're making music – she interacts, is playful and even a little mischievous. It's a part of her week she's able to take control over, and this enables her to be independent again."



“Chaplaincy support for us is not just religious. For us, spirituality means lots of things and our Chaplains draw on that in their work.”

Rev Dr Keith Albans,  
*Director of Chaplaincy and Spirituality*



## Providing support through unsettling times

Kathleen, who spent the last weeks of her life in our Abbey Park residence, found support and comfort in our chaplaincy service.

Kathleen moved into the Home when her husband who had looked after her for years died suddenly. So she faced not only the shock of bereavement but of moving house after nearly seventy years.

When Kathleen arrived at Abbey Park, our chaplain Pauline spent time getting to know her. She found out that Kathleen was too frail to attend her husband's funeral, and so arranged for a service to take place in Kathleen's room at the same time as

the funeral. Pauline spoke to Kathleen's family to find out which hymns, readings and addresses would be used and arranged for a friend to join them. After the funeral, Pauline spent time reading with Kathleen and supporting her through her bereavement.

Kathleen's son said: "Pauline provided vital, practical and spiritual support at a time of great sadness for my mother and us all. She found a way for my mother to feel connected to the funeral, even though she couldn't be there in person, and helped her grieve in the weeks afterwards. The care and compassion shown by Pauline helped her settle better into her new home during an otherwise very distressing time and really demonstrates how having a Chaplain makes a difference."



# Chaplaincy



# 130

Chaplains providing a source of counsel, advice and guidance

At all of our care homes and retirement living communities the spiritual wellbeing of our residents is just as important as their physical or mental wellbeing, and we aim to support that both among our residents, and their families and loved ones.

A key part of this is our chaplaincy service, and our 130 Chaplains, who are a source of counsel, advice and guidance.

This support is not just religious. For us, spirituality means lots of things and our Chaplains draw on that in their work within communities, and regardless of people's spiritual beliefs. Indeed, the support our Chaplains give residents and their families is for people of many different faiths and to people who have no expressed faith at all – it can be just about providing them with a listening ear.

The Chaplain is often just one of many ways in which residents can seek spiritual support – from dedicated relatives' groups, to

places like the Sanctuary at our Abbey Park Home, which is a quiet space in which people can try and better understand, reflect on, and come to terms with what they're experiencing.

The Chaplain's role is varied. Many of our residents speak to them at a time of crisis – perhaps when moving into the home or when they are unwell. Others may seek counsel on a more regular basis. Importantly, as well as individual-level support, chaplaincy plays a role in community-building and helping forge close links between our residents and staff, volunteers, their families and friends and the wider community.



“Pauline provided vital, practical and spiritual support at a time of great sadness for my mother and us all. She found a way for my mother to feel connected to the funeral, even though she couldn't be there in person, and helped her grieve in the weeks afterwards.”

Kathleen's son



£10 could provide an hour's chaplaincy support in one of our care homes





# One Day

This year has been exciting for many reasons, and particularly because we held One Day, a conference focused on tackling loneliness and isolation in later life.

## Spending One Day together in support of older people's issues

Held every four years, One Day was an opportunity to celebrate the work of the wider MHA community and, at the same time, to bring together leading figures from across the social care sector and older people's support organisations. Some 400 delegates heard keynote speeches from Dame Esther Rantzen, the BBC's Alison Holt and Dr Anna Dixon, CEO of the Centre for Better Ageing.

Four panel events enabled fruitful discussions about housing, social connections, challenging myths around ageing, faith and ageing well.

There was a clear feeling that community plays a vital role in later life, and there is a need to create communities in which people can thrive.

We will now be working with people and organisations who attended the conference to drive broader changes in our society so all communities better engage, enable and support older people.

The conference was followed by an evening of celebration and conversation hosted by MHA Patron Pam Rhodes, with worship led by Revd John Bell and Graham Kendrick and the sermon was preached by Revd Stephen Gaukroger.



"We have an ambition that every older person can be connected within a community of their choice, and able to live fruitfully in their later years. It was therefore fantastic to have a positive discussion about the possible ways to achieve this, at the conference."

Dame Denise Platt, *MHA Patron*



**£15 could buy wool for 'Knit and natter' sessions, helping friendships to grow and be established**

# Fundraising



## Recent highlights:

### Family Fun Day

Families, colleagues, and even pets met for the Best Day Out in Ages, with entertainment and an eight-mile sponsored walk, at Carsington Water, Derbyshire.

### Stair Climb

17 competitors took part in our first Stair Climb Challenge at Jurys Inn, Derby – with the challenge won by Andrew Jeffery who raced up more than 200 steps to the top of the hotel in 44.8 seconds.

### Best Tea Party for Ages

45 homes and schemes held a tea party on Care Home Open Day for residents and scheme members, relatives, colleagues and volunteers. It was a fabulous chance to socialise, learn more about our homes, and enjoy spending time together over a slice of cake.

### Best Sunday for Ages

Churches up and down the country made their Methodist Homes Sunday service round off the week of activity with uplifting songs and celebration. Around 2,000 churches took part in this annual event.



This year we launched Best Week for Ages, our new fundraising initiative which aims to engage not only our staff, volunteers in residents in activities but also the wider community.

## Best Fundraising for Ages!

With our new microsite [www.BestForAges.com](http://www.BestForAges.com) we encouraged people from across the MHA community – residents, staff, volunteers and the wider community – to come together in whatever creative, active or entertaining and, ultimately, best way they wanted – all in order to raise money for important initiatives.

As well as being a fun week, it was a fantastic fundraising success, with the money raised going straight to support our Live at Home communities.

As we move forward, fundraising activities and public support will become even more important to MHA and the people we work with. Our aim is that by 2020, we will have increased our fundraised income fivefold so we can provide support to even more older people.



**41%**  
Live at Home  
(45%)



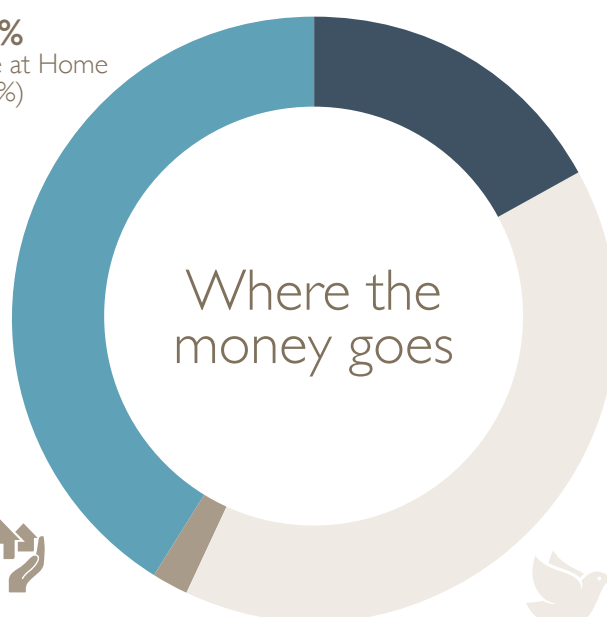
**17%**  
Music therapy  
(15%)



**2%**  
Volunteering manager  
(0%)



**40%**  
Chaplaincy  
(15% Chaplaincy + 25% New  
life enhancing care facilities)



Changes in accountancy procedures have re-defined Chaplaincy. This now includes all elements of our Chaplaincy service and now encompasses 'new life-enhancing facilities' which is part of the service but was previously counted separately. The figures in brackets relate to 2014/15.





## Individual Fundraising

Fundraising doesn't just happen once a year for MHA, and we're grateful to the many people who show their support in different ways.

One example is Jen Camiletti, who deserves a huge cheer for her effort earlier this year. Jen raised almost £3,000 for our Live at Home scheme by running the London Marathon. Jen was inspired to support us by her 89-year-old grandmother, who benefits from a similar scheme in her home country of Italy.

Jen said: "It's really important for older people to be able to stay in their own home if they want and to do so, my grandmother gets help and support from a similar organisation in her home in Italy. I know how much it means to her to have contact with people and she finds this really helpful.

"It's not the first time I've run the London Marathon, and this time I wanted to support something that is close to my heart."



# How you can help

If you are interested in getting involved with one of our fundraising activities, or creating one of your own, visit [www.BestForAges.com](http://www.BestForAges.com) email [fundraisingenquiries@mha.org.uk](mailto:fundraisingenquiries@mha.org.uk) or call the team on 01332 221641



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