Age UK East Sussex Launches Appeal to Support Digitally-Excluded Older People

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“Ensuring No One Is Left Behind” – New appeal launches to support the growing number of older people struggling to access digital-only systems to get the help they need

Imagine your mum, grandad, or a neighbour you care about needing essential support - but the only way to get this is via an online form and they have no internet.

Or perhaps they’re hard of hearing and stuck with a voice-recognition phone system that can’t understand them. Or partially sighted and expected to complete an essential medical form on a tiny phone screen.

For many older people in East Sussex, this isn’t a future worry. It’s happening right now.

As local councils and services shift to online-only applications for vital benefits such as Attendance Allowance and the Blue Badge, Age UK East Sussex is experiencing a surge in older people urgently needing help. Without digital access, or systems designed for accessibility, or just the confidence to face a barrage of passwords and automations, many are facing overwhelming barriers to the support they need to stay independent.

So, Age UK East Sussex has launched its new appeal, “Ensuring No One Is Left Behind,” running from now until the end of January, to raise £25,000 to meet this growing need.

Older people are being left behind - and demand for help is soaring

The charity’s Information & Advice service is receiving more requests than ever from people who simply cannot navigate online-only systems. What should be routine applications can feel stressful, frightening, and often impossible for those without digital skills, smart devices, or access to the internet.

This sharp rise in demand follows changes to application processes across the county - leaving many older people unable to apply for the benefits they are eligible for without specialist support.

The dedicated I&A team is now working against a three-month waiting list, and staff fear that with such a long wait, more older people will continue to go without the support they need.

Why Age UK East Sussex is asking for support

Funds raised through this appeal will go directly towards:

- **Recruiting and training additional advisors and volunteers**
- **Providing more one-to-one appointment slots**
- **Covering essential running costs** of the Information & Advice service

  (including telephone support, outreach visits, and in-person appointments)

These additional resources will help ensure older people get the help to apply for what they need - safely, confidently, and without long delays.

Quote – Steve Hare, CEO, Age UK East Sussex

“We hear from people every day who are desperate and worn down by systems they simply can’t access. These aren’t luxuries - they’re essential services that help people stay cared for and independent.

No one should be left without support because they don’t have a laptop or can’t use a smart phone. With the backing of our community, we can reach people sooner, reduce waiting times, and make sure every older person in East Sussex can apply for the support they need.”

How you can help

Age UK East Sussex is calling on local residents, businesses, and community groups to come together to support the appeal.

Please visit ageukeastsussex/staying human for more information

Even a small donation can help an older person begin their journey to accessing the benefits and support they need.

Campaign assets, images, and case studies are available on request.

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