Award for first age friendly premises in South Lakeland

Wednesday 17 July, 2024

A Cumbrian business has become the first to receive a new award in recognition of its efforts to be inclusive and welcoming to people of all ages.

Lakeland has received the first gold standard Age Friendly South Lakeland Premises Award for its flagship store in Windermere.

The award scheme was created by Age Friendly South Lakeland to celebrate businesses and organisations who have taken steps to make their premises more welcoming to older people, both in terms of the physical environment and behaviour of staff, and practices such as communication and recruitment.

Age friendly communities are a concept developed by the World Health Organisation to make it possible for people to continue to stay in their homes, participate in the activities that they enjoy, and contribute to their communities, for as long as possible.

Age Friendly South Lakeland was established in 2021, thanks to funding from an anonymous donor via Cumbria Community Foundation and the NHS Morecambe Bay Population Health Fund, with support from the Centre for Ageing Better.

Age Friendly Coordinator Katie Gatt and a steering group made up of local representatives put together a checklist which organisations must work towards in order to receive the premises award.

The checklist includes 40 points covering four areas:

- **Physical Environment** e.g. Is your flooring even and without obstacles? Is the lighting in your premises good? Could you offer a seat where an older person can sit for a few minutes without the obligation to spend money?
- **Respect and Inclusion** e.g. Do you have products with an age friendly focus? Are promotional materials representative of older people?
- **Communication and Information** e.g. Do you have large, clear fonts for signage, printed materials and website etc? Embrace realistic depictions of ageing in your communications.
- **Age Friendly Recruitment** e.g. Include short diversity statement in job adverts emphasizing age-inclusivity. Collect and analyse the age profile of the current workforce as well as job applicants to evaluate whether job ads are attracting candidates of all ages.

Businesses and organisations can be awarded bronze, silver or gold accreditation, depending on how many of the criteria they meet.

Lakeland, in Windermere, is the first recipient of the gold standard award.

Age Friendly Coordinator Katie Gatt said: “This checklist has been created to help organisations, businesses and community groups to identify how they can make their services more inclusive for people all ages. Hopefully it will encourage firms and organisations to think about what they could do differently to improve the experience older people have when visiting their premises.

“I was delighted to present the first gold standard award to Lakeland, Windermere. They really do go above and beyond to ensure people of all ages feel welcome.”

Katie, together with Annalee Holliday, Head of Grants Practice & Programmes at Cumbria Community Foundation, presented a certificate and window sticker to display in store to Lakeland Chairman Sam Rayner and Julie Glandfield, General Manager of the Lakeland Café.

Ruth Fleming, Charitable Giving Lead for Lakeland, said: “It is an honour to not only be given this recognition and to be the first to receive it but also, to receive the gold standard. At Lakeland, we take pride in looking after our customers, be it with customer services, providing products we are confident in or simply providing a safe environment for visits. After all, we wouldn’t be Lakeland without our customers!”

Annalee Holliday, Head of Grants Practice & Programmes at Cumbria Community Foundation, said: “We were delighted to be able to help establish Age Friendly South Lakeland and it is fantastic to see real,

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practical steps being taken to improve lives for older people in the local area. Congratulations to Lakeland on receiving the first Age Friendly South Lakeland Premises Award – and gold at that! We hope many more businesses and organisations will follow their lead."

A steering group oversees the work of Age Friendly South Lakeland and includes representation from Active Cumbria, Age UK South Lakeland, Carer Support South Lakes, Community Catalysts, Kendal ICC, Morecambe Bay CCG, South Lakes Dementia Community, and Westmorland and Furness Council.

Cllr Helen Chaffey, Chair of Westmorland and Furness Council's South Lakeland Locality Board, said: "Westmorland and Furness Council are delighted to support this award scheme that recognises the contribution local businesses can make to our vision that Westmorland and Furness is 'a great place to live, work and thrive'."

For more information on how to apply for the Age Friendly South Lakeland Premises Award, please contact Katie Gatt via Katherine.gatt@gll.org or 07546 985705.

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