DON'T COUNT US OUT. COUNT US IN: Age UK East Sussex launches Christmas appeal to make sure older people aren't overlooked

Thursday 19 November, 2026

Age UK East Sussex is launching its Christmas fundraising appeal with a simple message: Don't Count Us Out. Count Us In.

The campaign aims to raise funds to support the charity's Information & Advice service and highlight the challenges facing older people as everyday services become increasingly difficult to access.

Research carried out by Age UK East Sussex with its supporters, clients and volunteers found that loneliness and social isolation were among the biggest concerns for older people, identified by 54% of survey respondents. Digital exclusion and mental health were each highlighted by 50%.

Conversations with older people across the county reinforced a wider feeling of being forgotten or overlooked. One comment particularly captured this feeling:

"Nobody considers us."

It is a concern reflected in national research too. Age UK's 2025 Christmas research found that one million older people in the UK feel more isolated at Christmas than at any other time of year.

For many people, the challenge goes beyond loneliness. Banking services are moving online, local face-to-face services are disappearing and accessing essential benefits and support can involve complicated applications and systems.

Age UK East Sussex's Information & Advice team is there to help older people navigate these challenges, offering free, confidential advice and practical support.

The difference this makes can be significant. During 2025/26, the charity's Information & Advice service supported 8,053 clients and helped secure £339,340 in previously unclaimed benefits. Across its wider scams work, the charity also helped recover £257,070 for people affected by scams.

Joyce and Andy

One example is Joyce and Andy, a local couple who first contacted Age UK East Sussex for help. What transpired was they were struggling to continue living independently in their home and they needed advice about means-tested benefits. During an initial assessment, their adviser identified that both had health needs affecting their everyday lives and that they could be eligible for additional support.

The adviser continued to work with them as their circumstances changed, helping them gather evidence, complete applications and check what financial support they could receive.

Both Attendance Allowance applications were successful, and the couple were also awarded Pension Credit of £332.85 a week and became exempt from Council Tax through Council Tax Reduction.

Following a review of one Attendance Allowance claim, the award was increased to the higher rate. Together, their ongoing Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance payments now amount to £524 a week. They also received £4,700 in back payments.

The support has made a substantial difference to the couple's financial security, helping ensure they can remain living together, independently in the home they love.

Yvonne, Information and Advice Specialist at Age UK East Sussex, said:

"We hear from older people all the time who feel that the world is changing around them without anyone stopping to consider how those changes affect them.

"Our Information & Advice team is here to listen, offer practical help and make sure people can access the support they need. This Christmas, we're asking our local community to stand alongside older people and help us continue this work."

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Donations to the appeal will help support Age UK East Sussex's Information & Advice service and its work with older people across the county.

This Christmas, please donate and help make East Sussex a great place to grow older.

To support the appeal, visit:

https://ageukeastsussex2.beaconforms.com/form/112dc8ed

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