



**Happy
@Home
Northampton**


ANNUAL REPORT

June 1st 2025 - 31st May 2026

VOLUNTARY
IMPACT NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



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About Us

Happy @ Home Northampton is a befriending initiative supporting residents across Northampton postcodes NN1–NN5.

The project is delivered by Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire, a local charity and infrastructure organisation dedicated to strengthening community connections and supporting voluntary action.

Our mission is to reach as many older residents as possible, helping to reduce loneliness and isolation by offering companionship, sharing information about local services, and reconnecting individuals with their wider community.

The project is built on the belief that meaningful friendships and shared experiences can significantly enhance wellbeing, happiness, and overall quality of life.

Happy @ Home Northampton also champions the value of volunteering. We believe everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to their community, and we support individuals of all backgrounds to engage in volunteering as a rewarding and purposeful way to spend their time.

We aim to:

- Respond effectively to the needs of our beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, and partner organisations.
- Advocate for vulnerable individuals within the scope of our capabilities.
- Work collaboratively with local communities.
- Provide accessible local information and make referrals to partner organisations when appropriate.

What we achieved - Beneficiaries

2025 - 2026



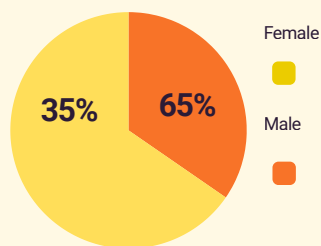
Beneficiaries - Combined Social Value

£531,000.00 *

Referrals Received

156

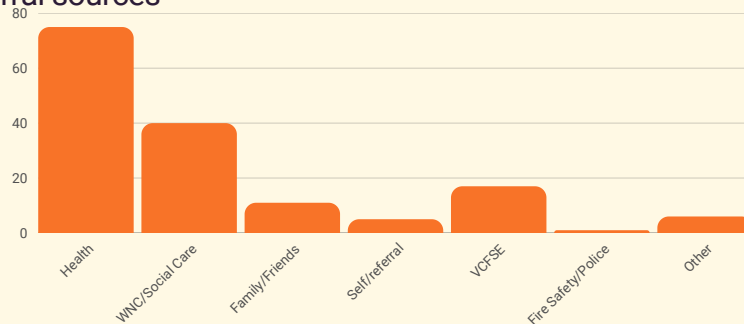
Referral - Gender



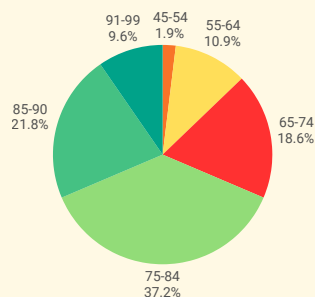
New Beneficiary-Volunteer Matches

68

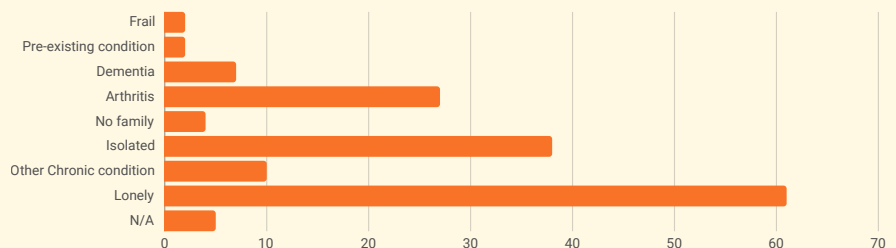
Referral sources



Referral- Age



Referral reasons



Beneficiary numbers have remained steady averaging 118 throughout the year.

* For sources see page 18

Impact on Beneficiaries

Older people will experience decreased loneliness and increased connection



Being with other people - Dave's story

Background

Dave, a retired teacher, was referred to Happy at Home in February 2023. After retiring, he became increasingly isolated and struggled with anxiety and depression. As he shared, **“I felt lost.”**

Challenge

Dave wanted to reconnect with his community and regain a sense of purpose through regular social interaction. Living alone and being mobile meant a home-visit model wasn't the right fit.

Intervention

He was invited to Time for Tea, a weekly volunteer-led social group in a local café. Although initially unsure, Dave attended his first session in March 2023—and has been a weekly regular ever since.

Outcome

Dave reports a marked improvement in his wellbeing and sense of connection:

“I was made to feel welcome.”

“I can be with people who are lonely like me.”

“My loneliness has decreased.”

Alongside Time for Tea, Dave has also joined the University of the Third Age (U3A), further expanding his social network and reducing isolation.

Older people will feel more confident and comfortable and be safer in their homes, maintaining independence in their homes for longer.



I've fallen on my feet – Heather's story

Early in 2025, Heather suffered a fall that left her with a broken leg. Her telephone volunteer immediately alerted our coordinators, and a home visit quickly revealed a deeper issue: her upstairs flat in a Victorian house had steep, unsafe stairs that left her effectively trapped. As Heather put it, **“I couldn't go out and I felt in limbo.”**

With her leg healing poorly and a knee operation ahead, it was clear she needed a safer home. Happy at Home supported her housing application, and when progress stalled, Roz (Coordinator) escalated the case to the local MP. Their combined advocacy finally secured Heather priority status on the housing list.

Heather later shared, **“I wasn't expecting that you'd be able to do anything. Staying there meant I couldn't move on emotionally.”** Speaking about Roz's help, she added, **“Wow. Her support was just what I needed.”**

Heather has now moved into a new home that already feels transformative. She has access to a garden, has enjoyed reading outside for the first time in years, and feels safer and more supported by her neighbours. Even her physiotherapist has noticed a positive shift—just four weeks after the move.

Reflecting on the journey, Heather said, **“Happy at Home have supported me all the way through this change. I'm so grateful – I've definitely fallen on my feet.”**

Older people will have better mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing.



The difference a visit can make: John's journey

Background

John was referred to Happy at Home Northampton as his growing loneliness began affecting his wellbeing.

Challenge

His health was poor at this time, making it difficult for him to leave his home and deepening the sense of isolation he was already experiencing. Days often passed without meaningful interaction, and the loneliness began to weigh heavily on his mood and confidence.

During a home visit, the coordinator took the time to talk with him about his interests and daily routines. Through their conversation, she learned that he enjoyed reading and had a long-standing passion for football—small but meaningful interests that could help reconnect him with others and bring some renewed engagement into his life.

Intervention

John was matched with a volunteer who shared his interests, and weekly visits soon began.

Outcome

After a year of visits, John described a clear positive change:

“My volunteer is brilliant. We laugh, talk about football, and now go out each week for breakfast. If I'm feeling low, he lifts my spirits.”

“ I'm definitely getting better. I have something to look forward to each week.”

On the UCLA Loneliness Survey, John initially reported feeling lonely some of the time. He now reports feeling lonely hardly ever or never—a significant improvement.

Older people will be better informed, with more information about local services.

During 2025–2026, Happy @ Home continued to respond proactively to the needs of our existing beneficiaries, with independence remaining a central priority in all aspects of our support.

A key area of focus was home safety. Every beneficiary was contacted and offered a free Home Fire Safety Check, ensuring they had the opportunity to receive personalised advice and practical support to reduce risks within their home environment. **12** households completed these checks during the reporting period and are safer as a result.

For those who are able to get out and about, we share details of local activities and community services, helping beneficiaries stay involved, informed, and part of what's happening in their area. Our friendship group at Cafe Emm in Weston Favell is one such space, where people can enjoy a friendly atmosphere and the chance to connect with others.

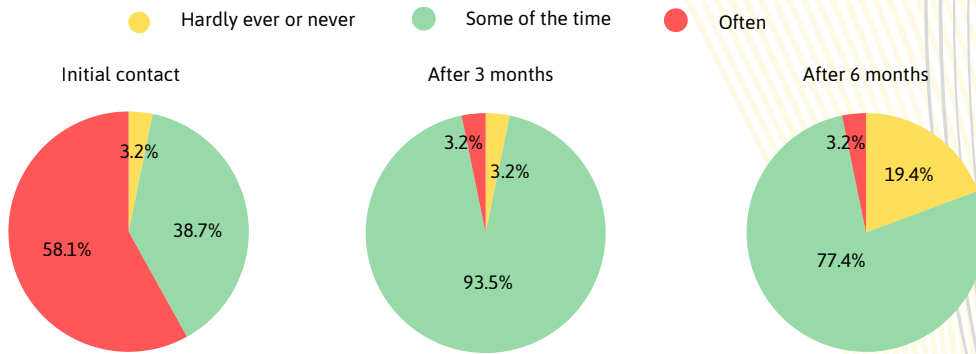
For those who are less mobile, we make sure they don't miss out by providing information about helpful services that can be enjoyed from home. One example is 'Library to You', which delivers books of your choice straight to your door.

We've also added another service offer for our beneficiaries. Texting. This is for those that struggle to connect verbally but enjoy some sort of connection. We currently have a couple of beneficiaries texting on a regular basis.

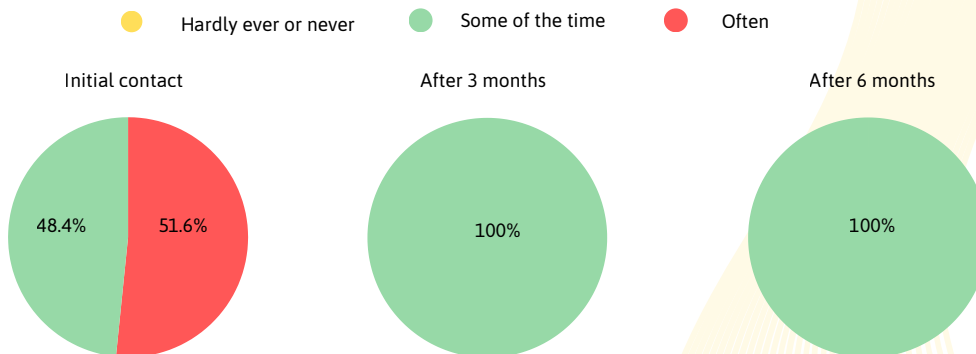
Together, these steps show our ongoing commitment to protecting the wellbeing, independence, and safety of the people we support.

Beneficiaries Outcomes - UCLA - Loneliness and isolation scores

How often do you feel isolated from others?



How often do you feel lonely?



A total of 31 beneficiaries participated.

Across both measures—loneliness and social isolation—the pie charts show a really positive shift. After taking part in the programme, far fewer beneficiaries said they felt isolated or lonely, which suggests a genuine improvement in how connected they feel.

UCLA Loneliness Scale

The UCLA Loneliness Scale is used to measure a person's feelings of loneliness and social isolation. It is one of the most widely used psychological assessment tools for loneliness and has been in use since 1978.

What we achieved - Volunteers

2025 - 2026

Our volunteers span a remarkable age range—from 18 to 85—and represent a rich tapestry of countries and cultural backgrounds. Together, they bring an impressive variety of languages, including Polish, Welsh, Spanish, Ukrainian, Russian, Kinyarwanda, Punjabi, Shona, Urdu, and French.

This diversity is one of our greatest strengths. We're proud to be an accessible and inclusive project, creating meaningful opportunities for people of all backgrounds to contribute to their community and feel truly valued.

We stay in regular contact with our volunteers and offer plenty of opportunities for them to meet up at our coffee mornings /afternoons.

Each quarter, we share a newsletter to keep everyone informed about recent updates, upcoming training opportunities, and new resources available to support their beneficiaries.

This year, 38 volunteers contributed 8,207 hours, generating £114,898 in economic value. Including wider wellbeing and social value (£133,000), their total contribution rises to £247,898.

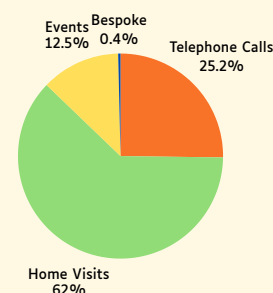
Total Volunteering Hours

8207

New Volunteers

38

Hours donated - Activities



Volunteer -
Wellbeing and
Economic value

£247,898.00 *

Volunteering retention numbers have remained steady averaging **78** throughout the year.

* For sources see page 18

Impact on Volunteers

Volunteers will experience increased confidence and wellbeing through feeling useful, feeling good about themselves or feeling close to other people

The power of connection: Terry's experience

When Terry retired, he knew he wanted to stay connected to his community. Having previously supported people with mental health challenges—a role he found deeply fulfilling—he hoped to continue helping others in a meaningful way.

He discovered the Happy at Home Northampton befriending role after spotting an advert in the St. Giles office window. Wanting to “give something back,” he applied—even though he felt incredibly nervous. He was pleasantly surprised by how warm and welcoming the interview and induction process felt. **“It was like working with friends,”** he said. **“I was just hoping they’d let me join them.”**

Terry has now been matched with his resident for several months and speaks warmly about the bond they’ve built. Their weekly visits have become a highlight: **“After our meet-up I always feel good. It’s doing something nice—not bragging about it—but having a quiet sense of achievement.”**

He describes volunteering as **“a fantastic experience,”** noting the confidence he’s seen in his resident and the easy, flexible rapport they’ve developed.

When asked if he’d recommend volunteering, Terry didn’t hesitate: **“Absolutely. It’s one of the best things I’ve ever done. Happy at Home are so friendly—right from the beginning they put me at ease. I’d recommend them to anybody.”**

Volunteers will feel less lonely and isolated through better connections and feeling involved in their communities

What volunteering gave back: Eric's story

Here is a short reflection on my experience volunteering with Happy at Home, and the impact I've personally felt as a volunteer as well.

As someone who arrived in the UK in September 2025 to complete my master's degree at the University of Northampton, I felt two things at the same time, excitement and quiet worry.

I'm naturally sociable, but moving to a new country always comes with questions in the background. Yes, technology makes it easy to reach anyone in seconds and I'm grateful for that but real presence is different. It tastes different, feels different, and it's something a screen can't fully replace.

I've lived in different countries with completely different cultures, and each move taught me something new. But no matter where you go, the same questions always show up, How quickly will I integrate? How soon will I find my people? Who can I truly trust?

For me, across every country I've lived in, I found one common language that never changes, volunteering.

Volunteering has always been more than giving back. For me, it's therapy. It's one of the most powerful ways to feel grounded in a new place because it connects you to people, stories, and purpose.

In November 2025, I started volunteering with Happy at Home in Northampton, as a befriender visiting residents simply for a chat. I've volunteered for years, but this was my first time experiencing this kind of volunteering, building rapport, and forming a genuine human connection over time.

After a few visits, I realised something, the impact wasn't only on the person I was visiting. It was on me.

Imagine sitting with someone who carries decades of life experience, listening to their stories, learning how they see the world, and being reminded what really matters. When you think about it, you can't fully predict how much that kind of connection can change you until you feel it.

That's why I've come to see volunteering in a slightly different way. Yes, it helps others but it also helps us. It builds belonging, it speeds up integration, and it quietly heals parts of you that homesickness and transition can touch.

I am truly grateful to Happy at Home for giving me the chance to be part of something genuinely meaningful.

Volunteers will develop new skills and abilities



Finding purpose through connection - Jess

Jess began volunteering hoping to help others while building her own confidence. Although she'd volunteered before, she immediately felt the difference in this more personal, one-to-one role.

Her bond with her resident quickly became the centre of her experience. She speaks with real warmth about the lady she visits, calling her "a good friend," and still treasures the moment her resident shared a photo of her first grandchild just hours after the birth.

Volunteering has supported Jess's wellbeing. Previously housebound, she now gets out more, meets new people, and feels her confidence growing. **"Now I'm visiting and talking to someone who understands the feelings of loneliness. It gives me hope,"** she says.

She's noticed her communication skills improving too, applying what she's learned about boundaries, confidentiality, and respect in everyday interactions.

The small moments shared with her resident mean the most: **"These small moments are precious... they make me feel warm inside."** She also values knowing she's making a difference, **"no matter how small."**

Their friendship is clearly meaningful. Jess looks forward to every visit and believes her presence helps her resident feel less lonely and more connected to the world.

Volunteering has even shaped her future ambitions. With a long-standing interest in nursing, she now feels drawn to working with older people in the community.

Summing up her experience, she says simply: **"It just feels good and nice on so many levels."**

Volunteers will have an increased feeling of value, self-worth, purpose and giving back to their community



Connecting to my community – Geraldine’s journey

I first became interested in volunteering for H@H after attending a group where the project was being introduced. During the Q&A session, the way the coordinator spoke about the work- with such openness and sincerity-immediately drew me in.

Since starting my volunteering, I’ve really enjoyed getting to know my resident. At the beginning she was quite sceptical and didn’t open up easily, especially during those first few phone calls. It was a challenge—but one I was more than happy to take on. Over time we’ve built a genuine mutual trust, knowing that everything we talk about remains private and confidential.

Emotionally, I’ve found the experience incredibly rewarding. It feels wonderful to bring a little light into my resident’s world. I look forward to our weekly calls with real anticipation because I never quite know where our conversations will go, and it always makes me smile when she laughs.

I also feel that telephone befriending has really improved my listening skills. Volunteering has given me a stronger sense of value and purpose. After being retired for 15 years, this role helps keep me connected to my community—especially to those who are most vulnerable.

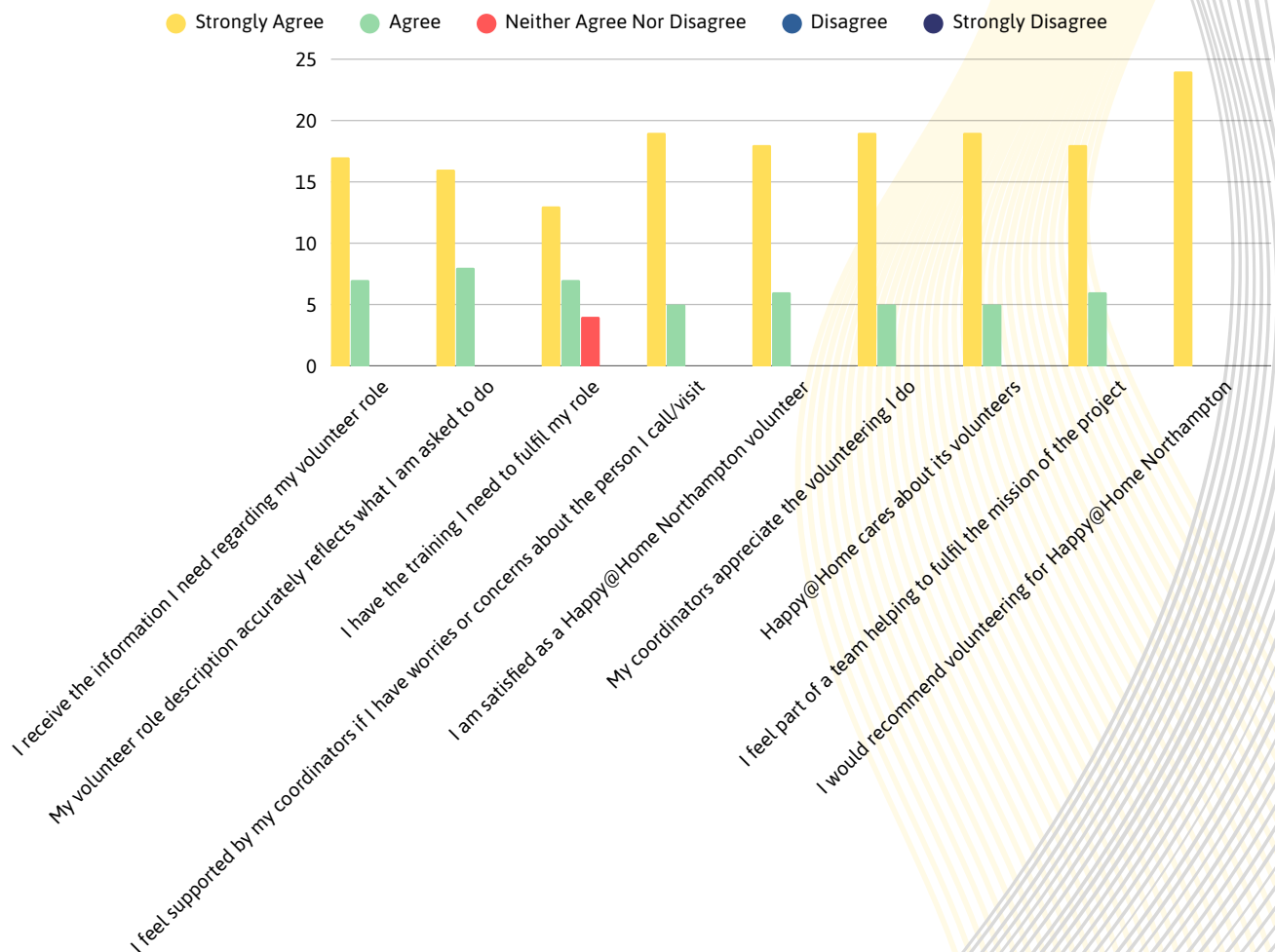
Volunteering has motivated me in other areas of life too. I’ve recently signed up for swimming and boxing lessons!

When asked if I had any suggestions for improvement, I could only say; none whatsoever. It’s an excellent format just as it is, and it’s an absolute privilege to volunteer for H@H.

Volunteers satisfaction survey

Our volunteers' feedback is incredibly important to us. It gives us a deeper understanding of their Volunteer Journey and helps ensure their experience is positive and rewarding.

The questions in the volunteer satisfaction survey below reflect different parts of that journey and guide us in improving how we support and work with our volunteers.



We received 24 responses from a randomly chosen group of 40 volunteers who shared their experiences with us.

Impact on the Organisation

Over the reporting period, we strengthened our visibility across the community by attending volunteer fairs, networking events, and partnership meetings. These activities have helped us build meaningful relationships, raise awareness of our services, and create new pathways for collaboration.

We have actively engaged with a wide range of local organisations to support shared goals and enhance community wellbeing. Our collaborations include:

- NDDS
- Car Scheme
- Age UK
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Community Health Champions
- St. David's Wellbeing Café (Kingsthorpe)
- University Adult Learners Fair
- JAM Networking Meeting
- Supporting Connections
- Daventry Volunteer Centre
- Weston Favell Library
- Café Emm

These partnerships have enabled joint outreach, cross-referrals, shared events, and stronger community connections.

Training and Professional Development

To ensure high-quality support and safe practice, team members have completed a range of relevant training sessions, including:

- Hoarding Awareness
- Suicide Awareness
- Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)
- Handling Volunteer Concerns and Complaints
- Safeguarding

This training has strengthened our capacity to respond effectively to community needs and support volunteers with confidence and care.

GALLERY



Christmas 2025 - Abington



Summer Outing - Stowe



Volunteer Fair - Weston Favell



Volunteer Event The Deco



Coffee Morning

Financial Summary

	Year 21/6/25 - 31/5/26 - Budget	Year 21/6/25 - 31/5/26 - Actual	Over/ Under spend
Salaries (inc. on-costs such as NI and pensions)	£28,739.06	£31,432.90	-£2,693.84
Staff Expenses (including mobile phones and CRM database)	£900.00	£747.84	£152.16
Volunteer Expenses (including DBS charges)	£1,000.00	£1,752.75	-£752.75
Staff and Volunteer Training	£850.00		£850.00
Promotion and Publicity	£2,000.00		£2,000.00
Venue and Refreshment Costs for events	£4,000.00	£1,601.63	£2,398.37
Activity Resources	£1,750.00		£1,750.00
Evaluation and Overhead Costs (15% of the annual project cost)	£5,885.86	£5,885.93	-£0.07
Total	£45,124.92	£41,421.05	£3,703.87
Total request per year from TNLCF	£45,124.92		

The finances for this year show a small underspend, mainly in the areas of Venue Hire & Refreshments and Activity Resources. We will plan to use this during the next year by holding more events.

*** Sources**

NCVO – UK guidance on valuing volunteer time (based on ONS earnings data).

ONS ASHE – Median hourly pay used for volunteer replacement cost.

HACT Social Value Bank – Wellbeing financial proxies for volunteering and community outcomes.