GIVING A VOICE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE

Voice of Experience Forum

ISSUE 71
OCTOBER 2026

REGISTERED CHARITY
NUMBER SC037466

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE FORUM NEWSLETTER



Inside this issue:

Welcome	1
Health Improvement events 2024-26	1
Digital Safety Awareness events 2024-26	2
2026 Calendar	2
NHS Lanarkshire's "Waiting Well"	3
2027 Calendar	3
Thank you	3
Local Group Activities	4
Current Scam	4

Contact us at:

Airdrie Business Centre,
1 Chapel Lane,
Airdrie
ML6 6GX

Tel 01236 439550

Mobile
07305692098

Email:
info@voef.org.uk

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter

COMMUNITY FUND

Hello and welcome to our winter 2026 newsletter! This newsletter will be a little different from our usual ones as the main focus is on the work Voice of Experience has undertaken through the funding received from The National Lottery Community Fund over the past 2 years. Although there is other information too!

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT EVENTS

Voice of Experience Forum (VoEF), supported by The National Lottery Community Fund, delivered a series of 7 Health Improvement events across North Lanarkshire between 2024 and 2026.

The Health Improvement events we delivered have demonstrated significant impact in raising awareness, promoting safety and fostering community engagement among older people. In particular, the larger-scale events, Prevent & Prepare, Futureproofing Your Health & Your Health Services and the recent Living Well for Longer events, successfully reached a broad audience and facilitated valuable connections with partner organisations. Meanwhile, the smaller, localised events provided focused opportunities for learning and social interaction within specific communities.

The Aims of the Health Improvement events:

- Increase awareness of falls prevention, safety and risk factors.
- Raise understanding of external factors influencing falls, including medication, alcohol, surroundings and hazards in the home.
- Provide practical advice on how to reduce risks and respond safely if a fall occurs.
- Increase awareness of assistive technology and digital supports available to older people.
- Offer opportunities for active movement sessions to improve mobility and confidence.
- Strengthen social connection, inclusion and community engagement.
- Provide access to partner organisations offering health, wellbeing, rights-based and social support.
- Enable consultation on local health and social care plans.

Overall, 339 people attended these events which have contributed to empowering older adults with knowledge, practical skills and confidence to manage their health and wellbeing more effectively.









VOICE OF EXPERIENCE FORUM — YOUR VOICE AND VIEWS MATTER

DIGITAL SAFETY AWARENESS EVENTS

Between November 2024 and May 2026, Voice of Experience Forum (VoEF), in partnership with Digital Skills Education, delivered six Digital Skills Awareness Sessions across North Lanarkshire generously funded by The National Lottery's Community Fund. These workshops supported older people to feel more confident using digital devices and to better understand how to recognise, avoid and report online scams.

Across all sessions, **124 older people registered and 94 attended.** Feedback was exceptionally strong: **100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed** that they had achieved each of the core learning outcomes.

The Digital Skills Awareness programme has delivered significant benefits for older people across North Lanarkshire:

- **Improved digital confidence** and reduced anxiety around technology
- **Stronger community resilience** against online scams
- **Practical skills** that participants can apply immediately
- **Increased awareness** of trusted sources of advice and support
- **High engagement** and strong demand for further sessions
- **Enhanced community connections**, including new VoEF memberships









VOICE OF EXPERIENCE FORUM 2026 CALENDAR



With support from The National Lottery Community Fund, VoEF produced and distributed the 2026 Information Calendar — a practical, accessible resource designed to address the persistent inequalities faced by older residents, particularly those who are digitally excluded. A total of 2,000 printed calendars were created and distributed across all North Lanarkshire localities, ensuring wide reach and strong community engagement.

The 2026 Information Calendar has proven to be a highly valued, practical resource that supports older people across North Lanarkshire to stay informed, connected and confident in accessing the services they need. The project strengthened community partnerships, enhanced wellbeing and demonstrated clear ongoing demand for accessible, printed information.

We would like to thank the other contributors to the calendar—North Lanarkshire Disability Forum, Lanarkshire Links, NLC Active 60, Making Life Easier, Getting Lanarkshire Walking, Alzheimer Scotland, Lanarkshire Food and Community Health Partnership and VANL Community Volunteering.

COMMUNITY AND WIDER INFORMATION

NHS LANARKSHIRE 'WAITING WELL' INITIATIVE

What is Waiting Well?

Waiting Well is the term used to support people who are on a waiting list to see a healthcare specialist or get health and/or social care services. This is important as taking positive steps for health and wellbeing can help to:

- Ease some symptoms
- Manage or improve health
- Stop new problems from starting
- Improve health before your care – this may help you to get better faster

NHS Inform has information on a range of supports to help people "Wait Well". This includes advice and support on activity and exercise, diet and nutrition, mental wellbeing, alcohol and smoking. It is also important to look at other practical needs that can impact on health e.g. money advice, home energy costs, cost of food, support in a caring role and social connectedness.

VoEF 2027 CALENDAR



As many of you will be aware, access to funding within the voluntary sector is proving more and more difficult due to fewer avenues of support and smaller pots of money being available. Although a vital source of information for older people in North Lanarkshire, the production cost of our annual calendar is becoming prohibitive without specific funding for it.

As a result, the Board of Trustees has taken the very difficult decision to withdraw the free calendar to our members this year and focus available funds in other areas of benefit to older people in North Lanarkshire. We shall continue to work at identifying potential funding avenues and hope to secure funding for this resource in coming years.

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND



The Board of Trustees, staff and members of Voice of Experience Forum would like to take this opportunity to thank The National Lottery Community Fund for its support and guidance over the last 2 years.

The events created by us would not have been possible without the help of The National Lottery and the success and impact of these activities is a testament to the community support provided by them.

These activities have helped us build our membership to over 400 across the localities and will enable us to continue our work representing and supporting older people in North Lanarkshire and beyond. These projects were made possible thanks to money raised by National Lottery players.

INFORMATION FROM ACROSS NORTH LANARKSHIRE

VoEF Membership

FREE Membership of Voice of Experience Forum is open to anyone over the age of 60 and organisations representing older people in North Lanarkshire.

Benefits of becoming a member include:

- Regular Newsletters
- Invitations to events
- Involvement in consultations
- Your views & opinions being heard by other agencies
- Influence in the planning of service provision for older people

VoEF also deliver presentations throughout North Lanarkshire.

If you run a group or attend a group for individuals over the age of 60 and would like to book VoEF for a presentation, please get in touch with Denis O'Keefe using the details on page 1.

Remember, Membership is **FREE!**

WALKING FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

Voice of Experience Forum were proud to attend the Walking football tournament, hosted by Newmains and St Brigid's Community Hub-Shotts Bon Accord Walking Football project and funded by the Growth Pot Fund. The event was very well attended and enjoyed by all who attended, including the match officials.





FRIENDS4U

VoEF also attended the inaugural Tea Dance held by FRIENDS4U in Carfin, and also funded by the Growth Pot Fund.






The Scam

AVOID

Worried about emergency locksmith scams?

Verify first: Check if a trader is genuine using the Master Locksmiths Association database.

Ask for prices: Get a total, fixed price in writing before any work begins.

Ask for references: Ask if they have completed work for anyone else in your area who might be able to vouch for their work.

Check ID: Ask to see company photo identification and check for branded clothing and marked vehicles before letting them touch your door.

To report a consumer issue, please contact your local trading standards office.



Consumer advice for residents of North Lanarkshire is now provided by government-funded Advice Direct Scotland, a telephone and online consumer advice service, which is supported by local authorities in Scotland.

Contact the **Advice Direct Scotland** helpline on **0808 164 6000** if you need help - a trained adviser can give you advice over the phone.