

Heart & Soul

Together, we're helping people live later life well.

Winter 2025

Featuring

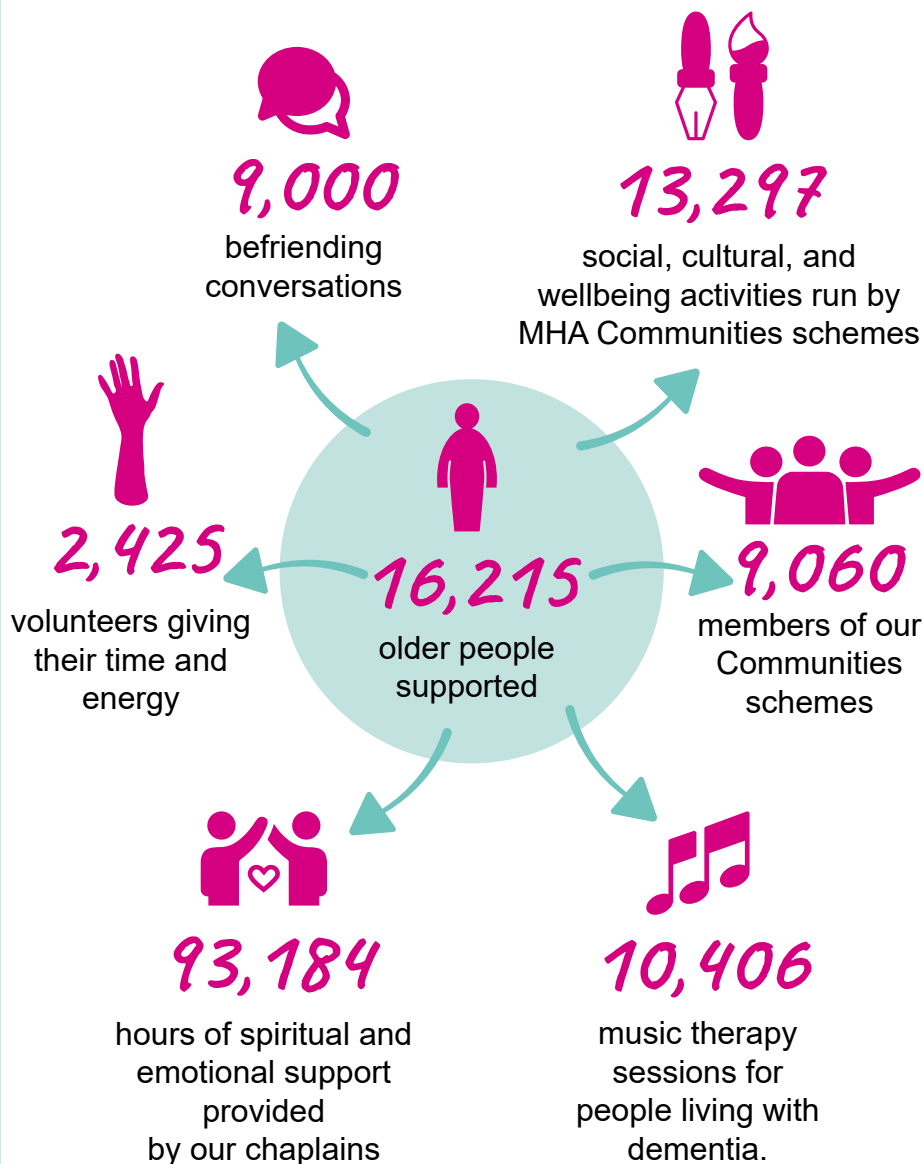
How our befriending service brings joy *Pg 4*

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The difference you make

The difference you make...



A message from Sam, CEO

At its heart, Christmas is about connection. For many, it's a time of faith and celebration; a season when friendship, kindness, and togetherness feel especially important.

Yet for many older people, Christmas can be a lonely time. Moments that should be filled with warmth can instead feel empty when family and friends are far away.

That's why the work we do at MHA matters so deeply. We create communities of care - places where everyone belongs, and where friendship and connection can flourish.

In this edition of Heart and Soul, you'll meet Paul, who receives weekly calls through our Befriending Service, and Ava, one of the volunteers who makes those calls. Their stories capture what happens when kindness turns into connection - and how both lives are changed in the process.



You'll also notice that Heart and Soul is changing. From now on, you'll receive one issue in the run-up to Christmas and another in April, giving us space to share more of the stories, reflections, and updates that bring MHA's work to life.

My hope is that these pages inspire you to see the difference kindness can make - and perhaps spark an idea of how you, too, might reach out, volunteer, or support our work.

With warm wishes for Christmas and the year ahead,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'SM' followed by a stylized flourish.

**Sam Monaghan,
CEO, MHA**



A friendly voice and a meaningful connection

How one befriending service transforms loneliness into friendship and joy.

Feeling lonely after losing both my parents and registered blind, I needed a friendly voice in my life. That's when I found MHA's Befriending service online - and it changed everything.

He was very chatty, which helps with the first conversation. He is so friendly. We got on straight away.

Felix calls once a week for about half an hour. We seem to just ramble on, but I like to chat. He tells me about his week, and I do the same. We also share the same faith, so we talk about our religion too. It's so nice to have common ground.



Having a befriender has made a real difference. It makes me feel wanted and understood. Hearing a familiar voice each week means a great deal to me. Felix's voice is familiar - it's more than just a chat because we have things in common too.

I really look forward to Felix's calls. It gives me a connection to life outside, makes me feel less lonely, and I would really miss his happy voice if it wasn't for him.



Paul Bown,
Befriending Member

To anyone thinking about joining, I would recommend the service to anyone. Give it a go - you'll be connected to a volunteer who wants to dedicate their time to speak with you. Once you've made that first step, you won't turn back.



*Make a connection
for £10*

A £10 gift sets up a referral and makes the first call that matters

Giving time, creating joy

Meet a volunteer whose kindness is transforming lives.

Ava began volunteering with MHA just over two years ago, and what started as an opportunity to gain new skills with our befriending service has grown into a truly special friendship.

“We just chat about anything... it’s like being on the phone with one of my friends,” she says.



Ava,
Volunteer

Ava had no previous befriending experience, though she had volunteered elsewhere to boost her CV.

She discovered MHA online and decided telephone befriending would suit her flexible student schedule.

They usually speak every couple of days, sometimes for an hour, sometimes up to two. *“It’s great doing it by telephone, you can connect with people all over the country,”* Ava explains.

They chat about family, friends, and even Ava’s cat – Mary* loves the pictures she sends. When Mary feels worried or isolated, she tells Ava how much the calls help.

**Name changed to protect privacy*



"Mary often says it has changed her life," Ava shares.

For Ava, the experience is equally rewarding. *"It's amazing, I'd recommend it to everyone,"* she says.

Knowing she is helping Mary feel less lonely brings her real joy, and their bond feels like family.

Ava values the flexibility, laughter, and the comfort of being able to connect whenever needed.

She hopes others will consider volunteering, especially around Christmas, when many people feel more alone.

For her, befriending is not just volunteering; it's a friendship that brings warmth, support, and joy into both their lives.



Become a volunteer

Give a little time, make
a big impact, visit
mha.org.uk/volunteer

How you can make a difference

Volunteer. Donate. Share.

Every action helps bring friendship and care to later life.



Give your time

Join our volunteers in care homes, retirement living, local communities - and at your church.

Offer companionship. Lead activities. Lend a helping hand.

Every moment matters.

Sign up today at
mha.org.uk/volunteer



Give each month

Bring friendship and care to older people every month.

Your regular gift helps people live later life well - creating joy, connection and comfort all year round.

Set up your monthly gift today at donate.mha.org.uk



Give your voice

Be part of the MHA family.

Share our stories and inspire your community or church to get involved.

Talk to friends. Post on social media.

Point someone towards local support.

Your voice helps us reach more older people who need connection and care.

Get in touch at

01332 296200 or
enquiries@mha.org.uk

Why I support MHA

by Elizabeth Britton



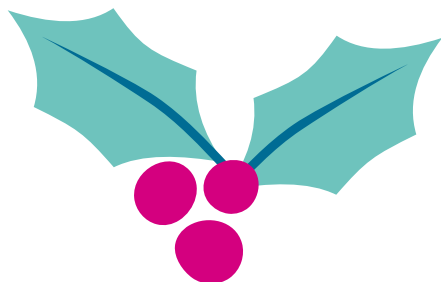
Elizabeth Britton,
MHA Representative

I have been the MHA Representative in the Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey Circuit for fourteen years. As a local preacher, I endeavour to conduct MHA Sunday services across the circuit, promoting *Living Later Life Well*.

Our family has an affinity with MHA. My brother-in-law was an MHA Chaplain in Leeds.

My husband and I have backed music therapy since it began, and I've seen just how powerful it can be for people with dementia.

I am proud to be part of the MHA family, knowing that it is the largest charity provider of care and support for older people in the country.





A thought to carry with you

As you've read in these pages, friendship is never a small thing. It has the power to bring comfort in loneliness, joy in daily life, and hope when times feel difficult.

This Christmas, my hope is that you carry something of these stories with you.

Perhaps you'll be reminded of friends who've shaped your own journey - or feel prompted to offer friendship where it's needed most.

You might know someone like Paul - someone for whom a weekly call could mean the world. Or you might be someone like Ava, with half an hour to spare that could change a life for the better.

In doing so, you share in the work that is at the very heart of MHA: helping people live later life well.

Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, and your support.

If you feel inspired to do more - whether by giving time, sharing your skills, or making a gift to support our work - you'll be helping to build communities of care where every person belongs. You'll find details of how you can get involved on page 8.

With warmest Christmas blessings,

Sam Cowling-Green
Head of Chaplaincy, MHA

Help create communities of care

Your gift will make a real difference in helping people live later life well.

Supporter details *(please print clearly)*

Title: _____ First name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

My Gift

☐ £10 ☐ £35 ☐ £50 ☐ Other £ _____

☐ I enclose a cheque/postal order payable to Methodist Homes

Or please debit my:

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Maestro/CAF card

Card no. CSV

Exp. Date /

Name on card _____ Signature _____

I am interested in making a monthly donation

To start a monthly gift, scan the QR code or visit donate.mha.org.uk

Alternatively, please send me a Direct Debit form in the post ☐



Gift Aid (UK taxpayers only) *giftaid it*

☐ Yes, I would like to Gift Aid my donation as well as any donations I make in the future or have made in the past four years to MHA. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the total amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to cover any shortfall.

Date: _____

Let's keep in touch

We may contact you by post and/or phone. To hear from us by email or text, please tick below:

☐ Yes to email ☐ Yes to text

You are in control of how we contact you. To update your preferences, call **01332 296200** or email fundraisingenquiries@mha.org.uk. To read our Privacy Notice, visit: mha.org.uk/privacypolicy.

Thank you for being
part of our community



Stay connected with us

Together, we're helping people live later life well.



MHA, Epworth House, Stuart Street, Derby DE1 2EQ



enquiries@mha.org.uk



01332 296200



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