

## **Leighton Linlade Community Agent Update:**

**1 September - 31 October 2022**

**Older Persons Sub-Committee 17 November 2022**

BedsRCC's Leighton Linlade Community Agent, Caroline Whitelegge, began work on 1 Sept 2022, thanks to funding from Leighton Linlade Town Council.

Caroline can be contacted by telephone on: 07498 625526

Her email address is: leightonagent@bedsrcc.org.uk

Caroline is funded for 14 hours a week, which will typically be spread over three days each week (usually Mon-Weds). She will be helping residents with issues such as:

- accessing services and information which may be physically (through obtaining a Blue Badge enabling travel and parking closer to local services) or through gaining the knowledge to make choices and decisions.
- obtaining benefits to which they are entitled such as Pension Credit, Working Tax Credit or Personal Independence Payments.
- remaining in their own homes for longer, through Occupational Therapy assessments and provision of home help gadgets; or through local assistance from the Good Neighbour Scheme.
- feeling safer and less isolated while living alone from a simple 'Message in a Bottle' alerting paramedics to key health info if the resident is found unconscious at home; to links to Bobby Van for stronger door and window security.
- coping with the role of being a carer through links to Carers in Beds, Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance applications, plus respite support to enable short breaks from caring responsibilities.
- linking to local volunteers and organisations, from those that can help (such as the Good Neighbour Scheme, and specialist health support groups) through to those that can entertain (such as social clubs and activities).
- participating in, and contributing to, community life, from becoming a volunteer and gaining the satisfaction of helping others; through to being able to take part in local events and opportunities.

### **Progress so far:**

Within her first month Caroline has already supported three residents, two responding very quickly to the article about the Community Agent service in Bee Local magazine, and one she met at a local Walk for Health group.

More followed in October, with Caroline supporting 10 new clients, 9 of whom learnt about her from Bee Local magazine, and 1 from LLTC's social media.

Issues have ranged from liaising with CBC to resolve a long-outstanding problem regarding maintenance of an overgrown boundary hedge bordering the garden

of an older couple which was adversely affecting their wellbeing; to supporting a couple with safeguarding concerns.

Caroline's first telephone query in early September was from a lady seeking help for her elderly father who lived in a neighbouring town. Caroline linked them to the local good neighbour group there and reassured the daughter that she could call again for additional support should she need it. The carer was extremely grateful and said how wonderful it was to talk to someone friendly and helpful.

During October, her support has included assisting clients with Blue Badge applications, referring clients to support and information about benefits, and identifying leisure and social activity groups.

Feedback forms haven't yet been available to send to clients, but some clients have given positive feedback via email:

*'I met with the group you suggested this morning, really nice bunch of people, I actually know one of their members from another club, of which I'm a member. So I am probably going to join this group, it's nice and cheap and I do really want to improve my skills.'* PF

*'Thank you so much for all the advice and I will check on the website you recommended, much appreciated.'* HS

### **Community Agent Plan for the next six months:**

The intention is to:

- continue to promote the Community Agent service through both traditional and online mediums to reach not only those comfortable with IT but also those who for a range of reasons may be struggling to engage with their community and the support that is there for them.
- identify suitable venues for holding one to one, face to face, appointments and community Drop-In sessions – such as the White House and the Chatty café.
- work closely with partners/colleagues at Leighton-Linslade Town Council to make good use of events and facilities.
- meet and establish more working relationships with local groups and organisations – to build knowledge of sources of support, and to set up referral links, so that Caroline can help their clients to obtain further support and so that her clients can access further support from them.

More info on Community Agent **outputs and outcomes so far** is given in the accompanying tables.

<b>Leighton Linlade Community Agent Outputs</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total no. of residents supported:	3	10	13
No. of residents provided with information/ signposted to other sources of support:	3	5	8
No. supported with more detailed needs than the provision of information/ signposting (thus becoming 'clients')		5	5
<b>Nature/no. of issues raised:</b>	3	14	17
Money matters		3	3
Home Security/safety			
Home/garden maintenance		1	1
Carer support	1	3	4
Health	1	4	5
Social activities	1	1	2
Transport		2	2
Other			
Total no. issues resolved:	3	6	9
Total no. of issues still ongoing:	0	8	8
Total no. client contacts made (visits, phone calls, emails, etc)	3	21	24
Total no. home visits made to clients			
Total no. one to one client meetings with clients at their other preferred venue – White House, Chatty café etc		1	1
Total no. community groups visited	1	1	2
These were:			
Walk for Health			
Chatty Cafe			
Total no. professional partnership connections initiated:		2	2
These were with:			
Citizens Advice			
Leighton-Linslade Health Connections			

<b>Leighton Linslade Community Agent Outcomes</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total no. clients reporting feeling more supported and / or connected to the community (based on clients who send back a feedback form).	n/a*	n/a*	
Total no. clients reporting a greater sense of independence through info and resources to make choices and decisions	n/a*	n/a*	
Total no. of clients gaining financial value through additional benefits secured or savings made	n/a*	n/a*	
Total no. people referred to professional support agencies via Agent		2	2
Total no. of people referred to Leighton-Linslade Helping Hands via Agent			
Total no. of people referred to other community organisations / activities via Agent	3	1	4
<b>Leighton Linslade Community Agent Resident/Client Sources</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Total</b>
Bee local magazine	3	9	12
About Town			
Posters/flyers			
Word of Mouth			
Local agency/organisation			
LLTC website			
BRCC website			
Social Media		1	1
Other			
<b>Leighton Linslade Community Agent Resident/Client Demographics</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Total</b>
Male	1	4	5
Female	2	6	8
Aged under 55			
56-75	2	5	7
76-85	1	1	2
Over 85		1	1
Age not given		3	3

\*Client feedback forms weren't available for Sept/Oct, but will be in use from November.