

Village Agent New Year Update

Happy New Year and welcome to 2025!

2024 was another really busy year for myself and my other Village Agent colleagues. What we are finding is the role of a Village Agent is always adapting to the needs of our residents. For example, in recent weeks colleagues have been asked to escort two different residents to their hospital appointments at the RUH. One had a terrible phobia of hospitals with a history of missed appointments and welcomed having an “escort” to keep them calm and focussed and the other resident, had dementia with no family based locally and needed a guiding hand with transport, timekeeping and getting to the right place.

We are really pleased that Avon Fire Service have now joined our network of partners and offer free Home Fire Safety Assessments to B&NES residents which several of my residents have already accessed. With the changes the Government made recently to eligibility for the Winter Fuel Allowance we are also again on the lookout for grants from various charitable/trust sources through which we hope to help residents struggling to pay their energy bills this winter.

I thought I would share some of our quarterly stats across our whole service with you, as they give a useful insight into the work we do. We had 251 referrals for Village Agent support, of those 153 were new clients. Just over 30% of our referrals were direct from residents themselves and 35% were made through GP surgeries or Adult Social Care. As part of the work we did supporting those 251 residents, we made 130 referrals on their behalf to other partners we work with. These included referrals for support in finding care, finding dog walkers, cleaners, handy people and gardeners, help to claim benefits, request for adaptations at home and to find social groups.....and many others.

Some of those referrals would have been made by me. I've had several residents who were pleasantly surprised they were eligible to claim Attendance Allowance, so I referred them to Age UK who made the applications on their behalf, I also asked Age UK to undertake benefits assessments as well. I got in touch with CURO Housing on behalf of a couple of residents to get some issues with their homes sorted out. I contacted the Bath Reablement Team as the first step to getting a garden path sorted. And requests to help find a cleaner and on one occasion a roofer too! Some of the most important referrals I made were to the Ageing Well Team. Three of my residents have chronic conditions and hadn't seen their GPs in a while. With their agreement I arranged for the Ageing Well Team to visit them at home for a medical assessment. They then wrote to the GPs making recommendations for changes in medication and treatment.

There is of course still so much of winter left. Please do give me a call or email me if there is anything I can do to help you stay well, safe and warm at home this winter. My email is: chantal@wern.org.uk or call 07391 068705 or call the office on: 01275 333700. Everything we do is free and confidential. Please remember, that although most of my clients have been older people we are here to support any adult over the age of 18. Thanks, and take care.