

CASE STUDY
VILLAGE AGENTS WORKING TOGETHER
AND WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Wickham area Village Agents

Links with the Proactive Care Team at Wickham Surgery:

A combined report from the LGA and the Campaign to End Loneliness estimated that a befriending, organised at an administration cost of, say, £80, typically results in a £300 per year cost saving to the state; and that savings of £900 per person per year can typically be made through a £480 intervention by Community Navigators. Hampshire Village Agents are, increasingly, linked in to, and accessed by, these Navigators or Proactive Care staff, who rely on our VAs, not just to provide them with information on local support networks, but to make contact with the elderly clients they are seeing, with respect to their social and non-medical needs, and to report back.

There are a group of seven Village Agents in the Wickham area, forming a network which, together, is linked with the Proactive Care Team at Wickham Surgery. This came about when the Proactive Care Coordinator contacted David, located in Wickham, and asked if he would contact, and visit, a patient from the surgery, on a non-medical issue.

Visit done, and feedback given, almost immediately the number of referrals started to rise, and so the ACH team suggested a meeting with David and the Proactive Care Team to discuss the scope of the required assistance, and to agree a process which could be followed to the satisfaction of all. A form for referral and subsequent feedback was the result, in which David continues as the primary contact, and the system is currently working well for both the Surgery and the seven VAs.

Some other Surgeries operate their own versions of this team, and have similar arrangements with their local Village Agents; indeed, all VAs are encouraged to link with their local surgeries for the very same reason.

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A growing team of Wickham Village Agents, covering a cluster of parishes:

Until December 2017, Wickham was fortunate enough to share two Village Agents, who between them covered Wickham, Soberton, Boarhunt and Newtown. One moved away, but since then not one, but three new volunteers are under recruitment, and so the Wickham team will swell to four! A meeting has been held to discuss how the team will work together, and David, as the most experienced member, is again to be the primary contact for any local referrals for the foreseeable future.

This 'team' may perhaps be the ideal, model, working arrangement for one or more parishes, in which both local knowledge and responsibilities are shared.

Village Agents sharing experiences with other parishes:

During the early days of the Proactive Care Team referrals, it became clear that other parishes in the Meon Valley, such as Meonstoke, were without any obvious contact who could act as a VA would in other parishes.

At the same time, a communication was received from a gentleman in Meonstoke who was concerned that Corhampton and Meonstoke should be providing a comprehensive support network for their elderly and vulnerable residents. Accordingly, arrangements were made for the Village Agents Coordinator and the two Wickham VAs to meet with local community members from the parish, to discuss whether, and how, a Village Agent was needed for their villages; to look at what support was currently on offer, and to consider how that network could be improved and supplemented.

At the time of writing, the villages are considering their position, but are grateful for the experience and expertise offered to them by the Wickham Village Agents.

Village Agents preparing directories of local services:

The Wickham Village Agent is only one of several who have either prepared, or contributed to, a local directory of activities and support services for their village and / or area. Others include Barton Stacey, Odiham and Milford-on-Sea.

