

Summary of Progress

Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge

During the period 2019 – 2020, Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge have continued to provide transport for Day Centre Clients from their homes to the Townlock Day Centre and then back again at the end of the day. On average 35 individuals have attended per month and some of these have attended every day that the centre is open (3 days per week.) We have also provided outings to places of interest throughout the Spring and Summer months. Many of the clients who attend are housebound and would not be able to leave their homes without assistance and a specialised transport service.

Our Information and Advice services for Tonbridge are based at the Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge office at 5 Bradford Street Tonbridge. Home visits have been carried out to housebound clients, as well as regular in-house sessions. A total of 191 clients have received comprehensive information and advice from our advisors. This has resulted in £745,668 of unclaimed benefits being claimed on their behalf. In addition to benefit work, clients have been helped to apply for blue badges and given information and advice on many specialised subjects relating to older age, such as health and social care topics, housing.

Our member of staff for I&A is supported by 3 volunteers. Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge hold the Advice Quality Standards accreditation, ISO 90001 and the Age UK National Quality award.

The information and Advice service together with our other services have, following the closure of Age Concern Malling earlier in the year due to insolvency, seen an increase in clients.

As well as the above, we have continued to provide a full range of services for the residents of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Area. We run chiropody clinics twice a week, toe nail cutting clinics, lunch clubs, coffee mornings, Postural Stability classes, Knit and Natter, Advocacy Service, Counselling, Independent Living Support, Your Home Service, Befriending and computer lessons.

We are very grateful for the financial support that Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has given us. Without this, we would not be able to provide the services that we do for the local residents of Tonbridge and Malling.

Maidstone and West Kent Mediation Schemes

These are the combined number of referrals to both mediation services from March 2019 to date.

43 Referrals and 6 schools trained in Peer mediation.

- 15 Neighbour/community cases
- 14 parent and teen cases
- 4 family cases
- 8 Anger Management courses.
- 1 preventing Homelessness
- 1 Restorative justice process
- 6 Schools in TMBC area have asked for the Peer mediation training for their young people, approximately 120 pupils.

Maidstone Mediation and West Kent Mediation continue to train and 2 cohorts of new volunteers, Spring and Autumn training; they are trained in mediation skills to deliver neighbourhood mediation, family mediation to address the issues that arise in the home, to prevent them from being made homeless, sofa surfing and presenting at TMBC as homeless. We also work with families when there has been Adolescent to Parent violence and the threat of homelessness, residents/ parents ask for our support and help which prevents their children entering into the criminal justice system. We are also able to offer Anger Management courses to any resident from the age of 12 through to adults

All of our work takes away some of the burden off the statutory agencies; preventing, responding and resolving the common issues in the community. Statutory agencies are working at crisis levels; Police, Housing providers, the Council and Early Help preventative services. If the two mediation services did not exist, the burden on those agencies would increase exponentially.

We are able to offer a free service to those in the borough who most need it, both services have the Restorative Justice Quality mark for 'best practice' staff and volunteers have trained and achieved the certificate of competence in KCC E-learning safeguarding.

The Mediation services regularly attend the TMBC meetings, e.g. the TMBC CSVG, The TMBC DA forum, and Strategy group meetings. We attend any training that is offered to us e.g. Prevent training and also offer training to TMBC staff. We constantly remind agencies of the referral process and about our service.

Imago

We have provided a volunteer recruitment service that has benefited organisations in Tonbridge and Malling.

- We have NCVO Accredited Volunteer Centre status
- Marketing volunteering - We liaise with voluntary and community groups to obtain volunteering opportunities and compile them in our West Kent Volunteer Centre newsletter. In 2019 6 newsletters were produced in January, March, May, July, October and December. Newsletters were distributed to 332 individuals in West Kent, 91 of whom have addresses in Tonbridge.
- We promoted volunteering to students at Hadlow College and to unemployed residents at the Help Me Out event at the Six-In-One Club organised by the Job Centre in July.
- We received volunteering enquiries from local residents and we directed them to www.do-it.org, the latest Volunteer Centre newsletter or provided them with tailored advice about specific volunteering opportunities.
- Good practice development - We organised 3 Volunteer Coordinator Forum meetings in 2019. At these meetings agenda items are suggested by the members and those present comment on the issues raised from their experience of recruiting and managing volunteers. This is an enjoyable way to learn from others. We have been asked to expand this into other areas but currently it is only on offer to Coordinators in West Kent.
- We facilitate employer supported volunteering. One of the matches in 2019 linked staff from the London Institute of Banking and Finance (LIBF) with East Peckham Parish Council. LBIF staff helped to clear the ivy from St Michael's Church for the parish council.
- Organisations also took advantage of our Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service.

We have provided direct one-to-one support to voluntary and community organisations that deliver services in Tonbridge. The type of support provided includes:

- Nourish Community Foodbank covers Tunbridge Wells and South Tonbridge. They were provided with a Grantfinder search and given advice about fundraising. We also supported their 12 Days of Christmas campaign by providing a location for people to drop off food parcels.
- Tonbridge Calling is an annual music festival that has operated in Tonbridge since 2016. The organising committee approached us for help to register as a charity in order to increase their credibility with residents and potential funders. This was achieved in August 2019 - registered charity number 1184821.
- We ran funding searches for Hope Church in Tonbridge, for the Hope Baby Project and later for a loneliness project.
- Arthurs Quest is a new charity which was set up in 2019 to support children with a particular medical condition. It is operated by 3 trustees from Tonbridge. We supported them to set up as a charity and provided fundraising advice.
- Home-Start South West Kent operates in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling. Their trustees were helped to prepare a Big Lottery application.
- Unlock was signposted to adult safeguarding training opportunities.

- A theatre group that operates across West Kent was given advice about employing a part time member of staff.
- Some Kent-wide organisations received fundraising support.
- Several individuals were given advice on how to start a charity and the different legal forms that could be adopted, including an individual who wanted to develop a coat donation scheme.

In addition:

- We promoted our Dial to Drive service at the Tonbridge and Malling Seniors Forum in July and at their Information and Advice Day at the Angel Centre in September.
- We worked with Stronger Kent Communities to promote and deliver a Living Well at Any Age conference held at the Angel Centre on 5th September.
- Our Dial 2 Drive Community Transport service has 29 registered drivers in the Tonbridge and Malling area and 259 clients. We worked with Free Cakes for Kids Tonbridge for a second year and their volunteer bakers supplied cakes for clients with milestone birthdays. In 2019 we delivered cakes to 6 clients – all of whom were aged 90!
- Our Community Development Manager is a member of funding panels for the Linda Hogan Community Fund and Kent Community Foundation that benefit Tonbridge based organisations.
- We produce monthly newsletters with sector information for local organisations. Our Imago newsletter is distributed to voluntary and public sector organisations, some of whom are Tonbridge based.
- We represent the voluntary sector on strategic partnerships including the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership and then disseminate useful information to the sector.
- We provided information to 5 thematic groups – the West Kent Young Peoples Provider Forum, the West Kent Older Peoples Provider Forum, the Community Groups Network, the Disabled and Sensory Impaired Network and the Volunteer Coordinators Forum.

Involve

Involve Kent has an SLA with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to provide support around volunteering in the Malling area of the borough, for a grant of £4000. During 2019 we have continued to be proactive in recruiting volunteers with a focus on those with additional support needs, taking referrals from support agencies as well as self-referred individuals. We have an established community transport provision in the area with a good responsive coverage now available. We have proactively promoted volunteering through work with GPs and other partners, through newsletters, leaflets and press releases.

In 2019 we extensively mapped community assets across West Kent, including Malling, using our custom online directory, Connect Well. Data shows that this has not just been used by Involve link workers, but by a wider range of colleagues within health and social care too. Listing organisations, community groups and other services on Connect Well gives them a wider audience as well as access to our grants fund of £25,000 which can be used to increase capacity, including recruitment of volunteers. When organisations sign up to the directory they are also offered a free organisational healthcheck through a partner which offers support in policy and procedure, including volunteering advice.

Our shop unit in the Mall, Maidstone, continues to be a prominent part of the community, with over 300 people visiting every month. Residents from Malling are able to access a number of groups and activities at the Involve hub and are able to find out about volunteer opportunities either with Involve or elsewhere in the community. On average we receive 15 volunteer applications through the shop alone each month. In addition to this, volunteers apply directly to the service, through the website or through Do-it.org.

Reporting on the specifics in the SLA for 2019;

Recruiting volunteers who reflect the demographic makeup of the district, and including volunteers who have experienced need for support from voluntary or statutory services.

We have 59 volunteers from the district currently participating in Involve volunteer roles or activities. 28 of these engage in 2 or more activities or roles.

Volunteers are currently in the following roles:

- 1 Postural stability class volunteer
- 3 volunteers supporting the older persons services
- 4 'Get Involved' volunteers taking part in gardening and DIY
- 3 volunteers in our allotment and shed

9 members accessing creative activities including knitting, sewing and craft

8 have completed 'Response' training courses

3 are supporting the local link worker in the Snodland Medical Practice

28 volunteers are involved in more than one role, this includes 14 volunteer drivers who also help with additional volunteer tasks within the organisation

30 of these volunteers have identified support needs either in the form of mental or physical health, prior convictions or low confidence, and have been supported by the Volunteering and Engagement Officer to access volunteer roles or activities within Involve.

Matching volunteers to opportunities within volunteer involving organisations

We support 54 groups/organisations based in Tonbridge and Malling. We are able to refer volunteers to these via social prescribing and standard referral routes (through the shop, online, direct contact).

Our Volunteering and Engagement Officer, based in the Involve Shop, takes volunteer enquiries and signposts either to an Involve project or an alternative in the applicants local area. Using our database of organisations, volunteer applicants from Tonbridge and Malling are able to be successfully signposted to an organisation in their local area. Our link worker based in Snodland Medical Practice will also help support individuals to access volunteer opportunities in the local area.

Providing support for individual volunteers, particularly those facing barriers to volunteering e.g. through age, disability, culture, income etc.

Volunteers are supported not only in their roles, but to access other opportunities. Our dedicated Volunteering and Engagement Officer offers 1-2-1 support, working with volunteers to identify opportunities they may wish to engage with. Volunteers are given information and/or support around education and training, further volunteer opportunities and full time work, amongst other things.

Involve have a partnership with Community Learning and Skills who offer free training courses which include health & safety, assertiveness, mindfulness and IT skills. Courses run throughout the year and if volunteers need assistance getting to

the venue due to confidence concerns, the V&E Officer can meet and accompany them to their course.

Involve run monthly meet ups for all volunteers across the organisation. This provides an opportunity to meet other volunteers from different projects, building social skills and bringing together a diverse range of people. Each meet up has at least one guest speaker to give information, these have included CAB, Samaritans, South East Water, Communigrow, RBLI and Think Action. Volunteer groups are led by volunteers to give them an opportunity to help organise events and work together to choose speakers that will be helpful for all volunteers. For the final meet up of the year volunteers enjoyed a Christmas dinner to spend time with peers and celebrate the festive season. This also offers a thank you from Involve for all of their hard work throughout the year.

Supported volunteering has grown and developed to include opportunities in art, craft, woodwork and in our community allotment. Involve also have a close partnership working with Job Centre Plus and have a regular presence at the Job Centre to meet with individuals 1-2-1.

Supported volunteer enables those facing barriers to move into further volunteering, employment and education.

In 2018 we provided a case study on Alex from Hadlow, who had improved confidence due to attending a Response course. We are pleased to update this year that following his course, Alex moved into full time employment with KCC early in 2019.

During 2019 we also supported a female volunteer from Ditton who had serious mental health conditions. At the end of 2018 she was absent for a few weeks but fortunately returned to volunteering in January. Since then she has been supported by Involve and improved her mental health. She has gone from one morning of volunteering, to 2 full days, as well as supporting in other projects in Involve and additional volunteering with other organisations.

Another volunteer from Watlington has been supported by the V&E Officer when appealing a decision from DWP to cut their benefits. We were able to offer evidence to support this individual and they successfully appealed, having a great impact on their mental health.

One volunteer, Ben (not their real name), has received significant support from the V&E Officer:

Ben has schizophrenia and suffers from aural hallucinations. Ben hears voices which impact his day severely and tell him regularly to harm himself and not to engage in any activities. Ben also suffers from arthritis and uses a mobility scooter to get around.

Before volunteering with Involve Ben found it extremely difficult to leave his home and engage with the community. Ben's voices would tell him not to go out and not to speak to people. Since starting volunteering with Involve Ben has joined the Allotment one afternoon a week, taken part in an assertiveness course through Response training, attended volunteer social groups and talks and taken part in a short print making course.

Ben has gained in confidence and attended a group trip to CommuniGrow in Ditton. Ben was not aware that such a site existed on his doorstep and signed up to volunteer with CommuniGrow 4 days a week, this was especially helpful for Ben as he was able to access it directly on his mobility scooter. Ben often has to rely on public transport to get around and there is not always a ramp available at the train station Ben get into Maidstone so for Ben to be able to access something so local to him has helped him greatly.

Promoting, stimulating and encouraging local interest in volunteering and community activity

Involve have delivered/attended the following events in Tonbridge and Malling:

- Community Wellbeing Christmas event – held at Ditton Community Centre- 130 clients (over 65s) attended
- Attended Pensioners Fair organised by Tracey Crouch MP to promote services and volunteer roles
- Telephone befriending service set up for Tonbridge and Malling area using volunteers
- Working/liasing with Crossroads on cancer support service
- Working with HOKH supporting Cancer patients
- Bereavement group held monthly at RBLV supporting clients that have been bereaved
- Shopping trips to Larkfield Sainsburys using minibuses and volunteers -26 clients (over 65s)
- Lunch event at 'Papas Barn' -30 clients (over 65s)
- Tonbridge castle visit- 28 clients (over 65s)

- Kingfisher boat trips x3 from Watlingbury – 40 clients (over 65s)
- Carers forums in Ditton and Tonbridge

Promoting existing volunteer driver schemes within the area

There are 14 active registered volunteer drivers in the Malling area. Community Transport users rely on this busy service to help them get to GP appointments, hospital appointments, social activities and even to the hairdressers.

The Community Transport service doesn't just benefit clients, it also helps to support volunteering, for example Involve Older People has a volunteer befriender who uses a volunteer driver to visit their befriender.

There are 51 venues in Tonbridge and Malling that drivers regularly drive clients to. 430 Older People's Service/Community Transport Service clients are from Tonbridge and Malling. In 2019 there were over 1023 journeys to addresses in Tonbridge and Malling.

Promoting good practice within organisations involving volunteers by providing support and information.

Information is distributed weekly in the 'Digest' newsletter – now with 1712 contacts receiving the Digest. The Digest includes events, news, training and vacancies.

Involve organise and facilitate quarterly VCS Focus Groups, networking events that bring together colleagues across the VCS. In 2019 there were 4 events:

- March - Nature & Wellbeing: speakers from Kent Wildlife Trust, Commungrow, Health Walks
- June – Volunteer Recruitment and Retention: information about REVAMP, a Kent-wide kitemark for best practice in volunteer management, followed by a training workshop on recruitment and retention of volunteers
- October – exclusive screening of 'Resilience', a documentary around ACE awareness
- November – Connect Well & Grant information: this event was based in Ditton and gave local organisations and groups an opportunity to meet with Involve staff to find out about Social Prescribing, joining the Connect Well directory and finding out about the £25,000 grant fund available.

Involve maintains relationships with 54 organisations across Tonbridge and Malling and are able to offer support and signposting to these groups when required.

Working in partnership with statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies including specialist groups to develop local volunteering opportunities

Involve continues to work closely with Commungrow (based in Ditton), cross referring volunteers between projects.

In 2019, through the £25,000 VCS fund provided by the Department of Health Social Prescribing project that we manage, we were able to award funds to VCS organisations in TMBC:

- Commungrow awarded £3600 to employ a volunteer coordinator, who recruited 40 local volunteers in 2019
- PSBreastfeeding CIC awarded £1560 to run breastfeeding support groups, creating volunteer opportunities for those based in Tonbridge
- Kent Association for the Blind awarded £2000 for volunteer recruitment costs, supporting 333 volunteers across West Kent including Malling

We continued to work with Snodland Practice to develop volunteer opportunities for patients – roles include befriending and driving, offering practical and emotional support to other patients. Patients interested in volunteering elsewhere will be supported by the Involve link worker based in the practice to find a suitable opportunity using Do-it.org.

Liaising with local organisations, including parish councils and other voluntary groups to promote services

Contact is maintained through regular newsletters promoting volunteering and other community initiatives.

Our online directory Connect Well has 54 organisations from Tonbridge & Malling registered on it, including Spadework, Tree of Hope and Malling Parkrun. This directory is free to join and due to being online, is publicly visible to all. Although designed for Involve link workers to use to refer patients from GP practices, the directory can also be used by others to seek information about organisations and services in their area.

An Involve link worker is based in the Snodland Practice and works 1-2-1 with patients to help them access groups, activities and volunteering.

Providing information through the Involve Kent website and online directory

The website is regularly updated alongside the new Connect Well directory, www.connectwellwestkent.org.uk. Volunteer opportunities are now advertised on Do-it.org and kentvolunteers.org.uk. Social media is now a key communication tool with 3072 'followers' and frequent updates. Volunteer opportunities are advertised in GP practices including Snodland.

Participating in local, regional and national campaigns, either individually or in partnership with other providers

National campaigns include; Volunteers Week, World Mental Health Day, Carers Week, Carers Rights Day. Attending the Maidstone Mela to give information about Involve.

During Volunteers Week 2019 a training workshop was offered on recruitment and retention of volunteers, as well as an information session about how to access the REVAMP volunteer management accreditation.

Attendance at:

13/03/2019 – Social Prescribing Day held at the surgery alongside One You and RBLI

22/05/2019 – Help Me Out

25/10/2019 – Over 50's Fair

22/11/2019 – CAB Digital Health Hubs discussion alongside Dr Prince

Providing input into strategic development of volunteering locally, regionally and nationally

Involve have maintained a relationship with Stronger Kent Communities, providing support in accrediting organisations applying for the REVAMP award. REVAMP is a quality mark designed to recognise good practice in volunteer management and was

co-developed by Involve and SKC. Organisations from across the county are encouraged to apply.

Carrying out DBS checks on all volunteers, working in Involve Kent, who work with vulnerable adults

All volunteers and staff working with vulnerable adults are DBS checked, and a DBS check service is offered across the Malling area enabling local groups to check their staff and volunteers.

Acting as an umbrella body for DBS checks for all Voluntary Organisations

We continue to act as umbrella body for DBS checks and promote the service widely.

Moving forward 2020 onwards

- Work with STP to scope and develop volunteering within Primary Care
- Increase number of volunteers engaging with Social Prescribing
- Train link workers to recruit and manage volunteers in the East Malling area
- Arrange a volunteer recruitment event in the Snodland area
- Continue to focus on supported volunteering for isolated and disadvantaged people
- Continue to support local community groups with volunteer needs, including referring and offering advice, support and guidance