



LIVERPOOL CARES

WINTER WELLBEING

2019/20 EVALUATION REPORT



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1. Introduction

Liverpool has a reputation as one of the friendliest cities in the world. Full of Scouse charm, wit, culture and history, it's kind-hearted in its very nature and boasts communities that love and support one another through good times and bad. It's a city that is proud, loud, tough and resilient. We are strong because we're together.

But everyone needs support in difficult times. And during the winter, it can be even harder for older and more isolated neighbours to stay warm, active and connected.

In the second year delivering our Winter Wellbeing project, Liverpool Cares aimed to find older people most in need of community during the colder months, and to connect them to younger people through our core programmes, as well as to local services and activities. Through our free Social Clubs and our Love Your Neighbour friendships, relationships are built and laughter and joy are sparked, as older and younger neighbours come together to reduce loneliness and isolation, and to create intergenerational solidarity.

The aim of Winter Wellbeing is to support that solidarity, to help neighbours over the age of 65 to stay warm both in and out of their homes, to stay active during the winter months, and to feel connected to younger and older Scousers alike. The project is part of our wider proactive outreach, through which we weave in and out of communities, strike up conversations with strangers, present to health care professionals and connect through a wealth of community partners we have the privilege to work with.

This year, we've enjoyed reconnecting with neighbours already known to us as well as welcoming new friends to the network. We've been welcomed with warmth into people's homes, community spaces and health care practices to hold conversations, to listen, to check how people are doing and to help spread friendliness across our city. As the Covid-19 pandemic hit our city at the end of this winter, and the lockdown was put in place, that sense of connection became more important than ever.

2. Our approach

Winter Wellbeing is rooted in proactive outreach. At a time when public services and many community-based organisations are struggling to respond to demand, Liverpool Cares has been purposefully seeking to reach out to isolated older neighbours, and to help them to connect to the changing communities around them. To build on our first Winter Wellbeing project in 2018/19, we focused again on the seven neighbourhoods we worked in last year: Belle Vale (L25), Wavertree (L15), Mossley Hill (L17), City Centre (L1 and L8), Kensington (L7), Everton and Anfield (L6) and Old Swan (L13).

This allowed us to re-engage with many of the older neighbours we met last year, checking in to make sure they had the right support during the winter months, and to remind them of the ongoing work of Liverpool Cares. By re-visiting these neighbourhoods it also allowed us to deepen our relationships with community partners and to connect with new groups and introduce them to our year-round Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour programmes.

We printed leaflets for distribution to older people during our conversations with older people in communities, who we reached in the following ways and places:

- **Housing associations** – we worked with three housing associations that support older neighbours living in sheltered housing units or independent living spaces.
- **GP surgeries and practices** – we struck up conversations with patients in waiting rooms and at flu clinics and joined patient participation groups.
- **Groups of NHS health care professionals** – including the Falls Prevention team, the Breathe Programme (Pulmonary Rehabilitation) team and the Clinical Psychologists at Mossley Hill Hospital.
- **Talks to community groups** – including at The University of Liverpool Pensioners Club, Dovecot Multi Activity Centre and Edge Hill Pensioners Lunch Club.

- **Networking meetings and events** – to both gather and share information, we were invited to the newly formed Age Friendly Liverpool monthly meetings presented by Liverpool City Council, Happy Older People network meetings led by National Museums Liverpool and Stay Warm with Winter events organised by the Community Health Ambassador Team (CHATS).
- **Striking up conversations with strangers** – a more ad-hoc approach was to strike up conversations on public transport, or to respond to enquiries from members of the public, including during our own social clubs.
- **Door-knocking** - We worked with three Housing Associations to conduct our door-knocking – Plus Dane and Riverside who we partnered with during our first Winter Wellbeing project and a third provider, the Steve Biko Housing Association, one of only two black and minority ethnic Housing Associations in Merseyside.
 - We knocked at five Plus Dane sheltered housing units, seven Riverside schemes and engaged with 17 older neighbours in Steve Biko independent living homes. This totalled 237 door-knocks, which led to a 90 deeper interventions for older neighbours.
 - We put up posters around each of the schemes and provided text to be included in newsletters with details of when we were visiting. We also liaised with scheme managers to make sure we spoke to neighbours who were 65 and over and were happy to have a knock at the door and a conversation.
 - This year, we were delighted to partner with the Community Regeneration Manager at Steve Biko housing, helping us to connect with older residents who might not have been as willing to open their door to us a familiar face in the Steve Biko team.

Liverpool Cares is deeply embedded in a network of community organisations. During the Winter Wellbeing project, we worked with the following fabulous partners:

- Anchor Women's Group
- BBC Radio Merseyside
- Belle Vale Community Fire and Rescue

- Breathe Programme (Pulmonary Rehabilitation) team
- British Music Experience
- LAB and Capacity
- Childwall Fiveways Neighbourhood Centre
- Citizens Advice Liverpool
- Mossley Hill Hospital
- Community Health Ambassador Team
- FACT Digital Ambassadors
- Falls Prevention Team
- GoodGym
- Happy Older People
- Health Homes Team
- HMRC Coffee Morning
- Homebaked
- Joseph Lappin Centre
- Kensington Fields Centre
- Kensington Methodist Church
- Kitty's Laundrette
- Lee Valley Pensioners Club
- Lister Steps
- Live Well Directory
- Liverpool City Council
- Liverpool Service User Reference Forum (SURF)
- Mere Lane Neighbourhood Centre
- Mossley Hill Hospital
- National Action Energy
- Onward Homes
- Patient Participation Groups
- Penny Lane Bereavement Service
- Penny Lane Surgery
- Plus Dane Housing
- Porchfield Community Centre
- Riverside Housing

- Sefton Park Palm House
- Steve Biko Housing
- Steve Biko Lunch Club
- SURF
- Sway with Ray
- The Kazimier
- The Link
- The Reader
- Torus Foundation
- Townsend Lane Neighbourhood Centre
- Western Approaches
- Wheel Meet Again

In February, we organised two **‘Winter Wellbeing Warm Item Pop-Up’** events for anyone over 65 to pick up free warm items and talk to us in confidence about any concerns or issues they have with staying warm over the winter. Events were held at two local community venues, one in Everton and one in Belle Vale.

The first event in Belle Vale was held at Lee Valley Pensioner’s Club, a community club for neighbours over the age of 65. The club members meet once a week to socialise and offer one another support. During this event we spoke to 103 older neighbours, handing out 80 leaflets. These interactions led to 63 interventions, including referring neighbours for our free Social Clubs programme and handing out warm items to those in need.

Our second event was hosted in Everton, at Kitty’s Laundrette. Named after the pioneer Kitty Wilkinson who opened the first ever wash house in the UK in 1842 on the site, the fully functioning community laundrette offers affordable ecological services as well as a space for people to gather, talk and learn. The aim of the event was to invite our older neighbours to drop in for a cuppa and chat about Winter Wellbeing and to pick up some warm items. At the event we met 12 older neighbours and carried out 31 interventions including handing out warm items and ‘cold home’ thermometers.

We made both of these pop-up events accessible to the Liverpool Cares network via the monthly social club mailout (sent to 452 neighbours via post and email) and to the wider community through poster distribution in and around the area. The event was also published on our social media platforms and sent to our 161 community partners.

On Thursday 19th March we were due to host a '**Winter Wellbeing Wrap-Up Event**' at a well-known community venue called The League of Welldoers. At the event, older neighbours from the community were due to speak to the Liverpool Cares team, to learn about our core programmes, to get signposting support for any concerns they were currently facing, and to collect warm items. We had also invited a number of community organisations to join us on the day to speak about their offers, including The Live Well Directory, Lister Steps, PSS, Torus Foundation and the BGET Warm Home Team.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic this event and all Liverpool Cares' other face-to-face events were suspended and we developed an emergency response to the crisis to help our older neighbours to stay connected in a doubly disconnecting time.



3. Project in numbers

From October 2019 to March 2020, Liverpool Cares:

- **Spoke to 527 people** aged 65 or over about how we could support them to stay warm, active and connected.
 - Of those, a 59% received at least one deeper intervention from us – 330 older people in total.
- Made **616 deeper interventions** in total, including:
 - Handing out **149 warm items** including flasks, thermal hats, scarves and blankets to older neighbours.

- Awarding **5 small grants of up to £100** (totalling £334) to those in need of urgent support. Criteria for the eligibility and value of the grant included:
 - People living alone;
 - People on pension-only income;
 - People with recently changed circumstances, for example who recently had suffered illness or bereavement;
 - People with high spending on fuel bills due to cold homes;
 - People with pre-existing health conditions.
 - Identifying **41 older neighbours** to be part of our Love Your Neighbour one-to-one friendship programme.
 - Signing up **149 older neighbours to our year-round Social Clubs**, where they can hang out with younger neighbours in diverse places across Liverpool.
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- Hosted **76 intergenerational Social Clubs** helping people stay active and connected over the winter months. These included singalongs, pub clubs, shared reading sessions, jewellery-making workshops, theatre visits and nature walks.
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- Distributed **1,719 Winter Wellbeing leaflets** to individuals and community partners to help share information about how older people can stay active and connected during winter.
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- Received **71 calls leading to 94 deeper interventions** such as delivering warm items or signposting to other organisations for support.
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- **Presented at 75 outreach engagements**, including at 12 community groups, 2 health and social care providers, 3 Neighbourhood Health Centres and 1 Flu Clinic.



4. Case studies

Below are a series of case studies which are indicative of the 527 older people we engaged with over the course of the project. What they reveal is the connections this project helps to create, and how the warm items we distribute are often a gateway to more meaningful and lasting relationships, and to other services and support.

Norma

Former nurse Norma, 87, heard about Liverpool Cares through a friend. Norma told us that she has difficulty with her sight that affects her confidence in going too far from her home. This has meant she has often chosen not to shop or spend leisure time in Liverpool city centre, but instead makes small trips to the local shops for food and groceries. Norma, who lives alone, told us when we first met her that she doesn't attend any local community groups as getting to and from them can be difficult.



On a visit to Norma at home we dropped off some warm items including a hot water bottle, gloves and a blanket and talked about how she heats her home and keeps warm. While we were there, Norma was having the yearly gas inspection from an Onward Homes gas engineer who found a potential fault with her living room gas fire. It was deemed as 'unfit for use' as it was potentially releasing carbon monoxide into her home.

On Norma's behalf, we made an appointment with the Gas Engineer for a second inspection and called back to ensure the relevant paperwork had been signed off with Onward and that the work had been properly logged and completed. On our second visit to Norma we identified that she was in urgent need of further support and gave her a Winter Wellbeing grant. We've checked in with Norma regularly ever since.

Sylvia

In January, Sylvia, 71, attended one of Liverpool Cares' Social Clubs – a 'clothing repair workshop'. While younger and older neighbours upcycled and repaired clothes over a cuppa and cake, the topic of 'those jobs that you always put off' came up.

Sylvia shared that she had never changed some lightbulbs in her home as she's got a heart condition and mobility issues with her shoulder make it difficult to reach up and change the lights. Our Social Clubs Coordinator told Sylvia about our partners GoodGym, an organisation of volunteer runners who provide practical support across the city.

We made a referral and GoodGym runners Matt and Pauline changed Sylvia's lightbulbs the following week. They told us that Sylvia spoke to them about her concern about trusting strangers to come into her home to provide help. Thanks to the strong, trustworthy relationship Sylvia has with Liverpool Cares, she gave GoodGym a try and solved her issue.

Alan

On a cold afternoon in February we met Alan while door knocking at a Retired Living accommodation in Everton. He invited us into his flat and we sat down with him to chat about Winter Wellbeing and the ways in which he is keeping warm, active and connected.

Alan, who lives alone, shared with us that he was cold at night and that his home is difficult to heat. We gave Alan thermal bed socks and a hot water bottle, as well as a 'cold home temperature gauge', to help make sure his rooms were at a safe temperature. A week later, we dropped off a King Size heavy tog duvet.

Marie

Early in October we met 78-year-old Marie who was referred to us by the Specialist Falls Team at Merseycare. Marie had been identified as someone who would benefit from some company and conversation in her home as she lives alone and struggles to get out.



Marie was matched up with younger neighbour Katie, 23, through our Love Your Neighbour programme. The pair have been friends since November.

Alma

We first met 72-year-old Alma when she attended a presentation we gave to Liverpool's 'City Stars' in February 2019. The City Stars are a group of volunteers aged from 18-80 who help support Liverpool's visitor economy.

At the event a number of the City Stars, including Alma, signed up to receive our monthly social clubs listings. Since then, Alma has participated in 56 clubs with her younger neighbours. At one of these clubs, we spoke to Alma about how we could support her over the colder months. Alma told us that her home boiler had been broken since October 2019. She was using electric heaters to warm her three-bedroom home; she had no running hot water and was relying on an immersion heater. Her electricity bills had soared over the winter months.

With Alma's consent, we spoke to some local partners, including Healthy Homes, Energy Project Plus and National Energy Action, to get advice about help to repair or replace the boiler. We passed all of this information on to Alma, and have continued to follow up on this to make sure her boiler gets fixed. In order to support Alma in the immediate term, and ease her worry around paying her electricity bill, we gave her a £100 winter fuel grant.

5. Project strengths

Liverpool Cares' second Winter Wellbeing project was ambitious in its scope and personal in its approach. This combination of breadth and depth made it a challenging project to deliver – but the project had many strengths, including:

- **More than doubling the number of interventions** compared with last year – showing that there is a need for the project.
- **Deepening partnerships in the community** – including by revisiting some of the sheltered housing units, working with businesses, referral partners and the council.
- **Listening and innovating** – through every interaction either in person, via telephone or email, our conversations are meaningful, compassionate and helpful. At its heart, the Winter Wellbeing project is about forging human connections, more than it is about distributing warm items. We listen to older neighbours, and strongly represent older people by telling their stories in a reliable and respectful way. This also enables us to find better ways to connect with other people, for example through our new pop-up events.
- **Finding space** – Winter Wellbeing does not replicate any existing projects in Liverpool and has become recognised as a project in its own right. Testimony from our Community Partners underlines this:
 - *“You’re not providing a service, you’re building a community”* – Local Solutions.
 - *“Liverpool Cares is great. This is what everybody has been asking for”* – Steve Biko Housing Association.
- **Repetition** – our year-long outreach in the lead up to our second Winter Wellbeing project meant we had existing referral pathways in Primary Care and in specialist service providers including mental health and falls prevention teams.
- **Raising the profile of Liverpool Cares** – through Winter Wellbeing this year we grew the network by a further 282 older neighbours, bringing the total number of

older people involved, in eighteen months of operation, to 715 as at May 2020.



6. Recommendations for future projects

As with any young organisation, we have learnt a lot. Below are some of the challenges we encountered and recommendations for deepening Winter Wellbeing's future impact.

- **Area for improvement** – This year we worked in the same seven neighbourhoods as our first Winter Wellbeing project, so that we could deepen our impact. This allowed us to re-engage with residents, build new connections and re-emphasise our Winter Wellbeing message, but there are areas of the city that are still not benefiting from the work.
- **Recommendation** – Now that we are better known in Liverpool, it is important that we diversify and continue to grow our network across new neighbourhoods. These could include, but not be limited to, Clubmoor, Croxteth, County, Fazakerly and Kirkdale. Our summer outreach will begin to form links with community groups and leaders, foodbanks, churches, and supermarkets as well as GP surgeries and health practices to establish relationships and build trust prior to our next Winter Wellbeing project.

- **Area for improvement** – We worked with three housing organisations, which allowed us to connect with residents over the age of 65 living in our target areas. However there are a number of schemes we have not yet visited and whose residents could likewise benefit from Winter Wellbeing.
- **Recommendation** – We will build partnerships during the course of 2020 to include these previously unvisited schemes in the new neighbourhoods we plan to work in.
- **Area for improvement** – We have not routinely recorded or disaggregated data of the ethnicity of the older neighbours we have engaged on the project, but we know anecdotally that individuals from BAME communities have been under-represented.
- **Recommendation** – To grow the representation of individuals from BAME backgrounds, we will strengthen our partnership with Steve Biko Housing and make links with other housing associations – for example, Pine Court Housing who focus on Chinese and South East Asian communities. We will also have conversations with the Social Inclusion Team in Liverpool and are keen to work with organisations and individuals that support people for whom English is a second language.
- **Area for improvement** – We have met neighbours between the ages of 55 and 65, which is not Liverpool Cares’ target age range. We need to find ways to connect this age group to other local partners.
- **Recommendation** – will will work more closely with community partners including Citizens Advice and the Live Well Directory so we can better connect neighbours to mental health and wellbeing services.
- **Area for improvement** – We trialled working in GP surgeries and neighbourhood centres and we would like to continue this methodology to connect communities. However, the conversations we had with GPs this year informed us that flu clinics take place before the start of our Winter Wellbeing project – so we need to align timetables better in future.

- **Recommendation** – in 2020 we will contact GP surgeries in the summer to have conversations about having a presence at flu clinics which are usually from mid-September. With the emergency around the Covid-19 pandemic, we will build partnerships early to ensure we consider various ways to work with health services.
- **Area for improvement** – We have up to ten Winter Fuel Grants available each year for those most in need. This year we made only five grants.
- **Recommendation** – in future, we could deepen our work with primary care professionals including GP practices, district nurses and community group leaders, to help us identify and support those most in need.
- **Area for improvement** – door-knocking at sheltered housing units is only a small part of a bigger picture in supporting people over 65 during winter. In order to better support our wider communities in Liverpool we need to consider engaging in private housing door-knocking, to reach neighbours who may be vulnerable and also invisible to society.
- **Recommendation** – in future, we could work with Liverpool City Council and the Liverpool Age Friendly group to identify residents in the most appropriate way, by post, telephone or by door knocking. It would be also beneficial for us to create relationships with residents and tenants' associations to help identify people that are housebound.

7. **Conclusion**

Liverpool is a city that appreciates and demonstrates kindness. It's a city that responds to people helping and supporting others, and we have witnessed this through the many conversations we have had with older neighbours, community groups and health care professionals – both during Winter Wellbeing and as the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

This year, Winter Wellbeing focused again on learning about the needs of the communities and individuals we are seeking to connect. The project has been a 'gateway' for many people into other sources of support – provided both by Liverpool Cares and our broad network of wonderful partners.

In its second year, Winter Wellbeing has been welcomed by those partners and older neighbours alike. We built on last year's foundation by returning to the same neighbourhoods. We also put greater focus on building strong referral pathways with health care professionals, working in GP practices and having more of a presence in neighbourhood community centres where people come together. This is work we can further build on in the future.

The aim of this project was to support people over the age of 65 to stay warm, active and connected during the winter months. By signposting people towards our Social Clubs we encouraged them to stay active by getting out and about and to hang out and have fun with their younger neighbours. Through bringing younger and older people together, we gave people opportunities to remain connected. And we supported older neighbours by handing out free warm items, such as hot water bottles, blankets, gloves and scarves, and by making offers of further support through signposting or through Winter Wellbeing Grants to keep them stay warm.

We did this by listening, and by building trust. Respecting individuals for their full stories and personalities improves connection, confidence, resilience and power. That helps neighbours to feel part of our changing city rather than left behind by it.

However, arriving as it did towards the end of our Winter Wellbeing project, the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed a new layer of disconnection and loneliness in our city and our society. It is clear that, as we consider the post-pandemic recovery, deep consideration for reducing loneliness by increasing generational unity and solidarity even further will be key – and Liverpool Cares will need to adapt to those changing circumstances.

We will always begin that process – as we ended this project – by listening. As a result of our intense work during this second Winter Wellbeing project and our emergency response during the pandemic, Liverpool Cares will go into 2020/21 with an even deeper understanding of our neighbours' challenges. We will be in a position to engage even more neighbours who are trapped behind closed doors, to expand the areas we work in,

to widen diversity, and to continue to explore new methods of outreach to make the most meaningful interventions we can.

And we will be in a stronger position to continue to champion the message that older and younger people coming together to form genuine friendships can bridge generational, attitudinal, digital and cultural divides, and is a mutually beneficial experience for younger and older people alike.

It's been one of the best years of my life. I would never have come to anything like this if I wasn't part of this group."

May, 76