



MANCHESTER CARES

WINTER WELLBEING
2019/20 EVALUATION REPORT



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Objectives	4
3. Approach	5
4. Projects in numbers	6
5. Case studies	7
6. Project strengths	11
7. Partnerships	11
8. Recommendations for future projects	15
9. Covid-19 response	16
10. Conclusion	16

1. Introduction

Winter can be a wonderful time of year filled with Christmas treats, time with family, and cosying up with friends on the coldest days. But of course not everyone looks forward to winter. For many of our older neighbours across Manchester, the dark days and freezing temperatures can be isolating – and can put neighbours' health, wellbeing, financial stability and social connection at risk.

Short days and icy pavements can make getting out – even to do the weekly food shop – feel daunting. The city can feel alienating to those who have little or no connection to the people around them; confronted with streets and buildings that are rapidly changing. Many find it difficult to access resources that make life easier or enjoy the human interactions that make life worth living, and high heating bills can deepen the challenges associated with the colder months. For those people, winter can be the most isolating and worrying time of the year.

This is why Manchester Cares launched its third Winter Wellbeing project in October 2019. From Whalley Range, Rusholme and Withington, to Ancoats, Miles Platting and Beswick, and everywhere in between, we have connected – through proactive outreach – with older neighbours who are most at risk of being left behind as the days get shorter and nights get colder.

The project is part of Manchester Cares' vision to help reduce loneliness and isolation amongst older and younger Mancunians alike; to improve neighbours' confidence, connection, belonging, purpose and power; and to reduce the gaps across social, generational, digital and attitudinal divides.

Alongside Manchester Cares' [Social Clubs](#), [Love Your Neighbour](#) one-to-one friendship programmes and [Community Fundraising](#), our proactive outreach identifies older people at risk of isolation and connects them to local interventions that can make an immediate difference, as well as to year-round experiences and relationships with younger Mancunians. Together, these interactions and interventions help older and younger people alike to stay connected in disconnecting times.

“You’ve been a huge help and have done everything you can to get me sorted.”

Christine, 68

2. Objectives

Winter Wellbeing has **three key objectives**:

- **To meet older neighbours** that may already be at risk of isolation but due to cold weather are even less likely to leave the house or have visitors – in particular those who may be housebound – to ensure that people who might otherwise be unforthcoming in accessing mainstream public services or local activities do not fall through the gaps in statutory provision and to make referrals to those services as required.
- **To lead with a preventative approach** – identifying neighbours who may be at risk of isolation and loneliness further down the line and highlighting concerns early so that problems do not become emergencies.
- **To invite people who may be at risk of isolation to exciting and inclusive activities** with younger Mancunians, whether that be through social clubs or introducing them to someone through Manchester Cares' Love Your Neighbour one-to-one friendship programme.



3. Approach

In order to achieve these aims, Manchester Cares' Winter Wellbeing project focuses on creating hundreds of interactions and interventions, including:

- **The delivery of warm items** including thermal layers, duvets, hats, gloves, socks and thermos flasks, so that older neighbours who may be struggling with the cold can stay warm;
- **Signposting and referring** into housing support, partner voluntary organisations such as Age UK Manchester and Citizens Advice, and health and social services which can offer practical support;
- **Winter Wellbeing grants of up to £100 for those neighbours most in need** – for example people struggling with fuel poverty or rapidly changing circumstances related to winter which might deepen isolation and/or anxiety;
- **Invitations to Manchester Cares' year-round Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour** programmes – to help build meaningful social networks with younger Mancunians.

“I really appreciate you coming over to bring me something.”

Ernie, 86

To achieve those interventions, we aimed to have as **many interactions** with older people in our target areas as possible. We did this through a combination of:

- **Door-knocking**, with a new focus this year on private and general need housing;
- **Working with housing providers** to distribute leaflets and run 'Outreach Social Clubs' in their communal spaces;
- **Attending and speaking at community events** and groups;
- **Working closely with GPs**, pharmacies and local businesses;
- **Building community partnerships** with other local organisations.

“Isn't it lovely that people have thought of us.”

Joyce, 87

4. Project in numbers

One of the clearest ways to measure the reach of the Winter Wellbeing project is to assess the numbers of people who received support and connections. From **October 2019 to March 2020**:

- **394 face-to-face conversations** with older people were held;
- **241 older neighbours received further help**;
- **2 people received Winter Wellbeing grants** of between **£30 and £100**, with a total of **£130** awarded to those individuals;
- **56 older neighbours were referred to be matched with a younger neighbour** for weekly visits through Manchester Cares' Love Your Neighbour programme;
- **110 deeper interventions** were made, from speaking to GPs on behalf of older neighbours to organising hearing test appointments;
- **131 warm items were delivered**, including duvets, hats, gloves and scarves, to individuals who felt cold in their homes and didn't feel they had adequate clothing to get out and about;
- **150 older neighbours signed up to receive the monthly Social Clubs programme**, and will now receive details of up to 15 free social clubs with younger Mancunians every month;
- **Older and younger neighbours attended 66 social clubs 634 times** between October and March;
- **Over 750 leaflets** sharing information about the Winter Wellbeing project support, health messages and Manchester Cares' activities were **distributed** across the City of Manchester;
- We **attended 36 community groups and events** to raise awareness not only of our own programmes, but also to help people access a range of support from other organisations;
- We **carried out a further 13 doorknocking sessions, knocking on 441 doors** to speak with older neighbours about Winter Wellbeing and our year-round activities on their doorsteps;
- 52% of those we supported were between 65 and 80 years old, **41% were aged 80 and over***.

*We also supported 22 people who were below the age of 65 – however, this is not our target demographic.

5. Case studies

Numbers are important, but they do not tell the whole story of the Winter Wellbeing project. Part of what makes the project important is its highly personal approach. We treated every person we met as an individual, spending time listening to their problems (with no limits to conversations or follow-up calls), and supporting people to access what they needed – regularly helping to make sense of confusing forms or online processes that are so fundamental to navigating the modern world. Below are just a few of those stories.

Vittorio

Vittorio, 77, was referred for Winter Wellbeing support by a member of the Care Navigation team based in Ardwick and Longsight. When we first met Vittorio he was facing health and housing issues and didn't know how to access the support he needed.

Vittorio has very limited mobility and although he has a scooter which supports him to get out and about in Manchester, moving around his flat is very difficult.

Through the Winter Wellbeing project:

- Vittorio received a clothes horse (so that he could more easily hang washing, as he was unable to stand and hang things on his current line);
- Our team spoke to Citizens Advice on his behalf to receive guidance on the benefits that would be most appropriate for Vittorio;
- Our team arranged for Vittorio's care needs to be reassessed in order to get some help at home and to arrange for a cleaner to support him regularly;
- Vittorio has been matched with younger neighbour Giulia for weekly visits through our Love Your Neighbour programme. Their friendship started with a mutual love of Italy, exploring Manchester and nature.



Manchester Cares

Published by Amy Saunders [?] · 29 January · 🌐

Meet Vittorio, 77. One picture is from the other day, when our outreach team delivered a clothes dryer for him, and the other is from a holiday in Italy, nearly 40 years ago.

Vittorio is from Lake Maggiore in Italy and initially moved to the UK, and travelled much of Europe, from 1962. He's worked in Italian restaurants (mostly with pizza!) all his life, and still enjoys cooking. We've enjoyed hearing all about his adventures, from working in restaurants in Norway, where he told us at times it was only light for 2 or 3 hours a day, to living in Liverpool, and now to a high-rise in Ardwick.

After meeting our outreach team he has had help through Winter Wellbeing, and will soon be coming along to Social Clubs and being matched with a younger neighbour nearby through Love Your Neighbour.



“He recited Italian poetry to me and we spoke about his uncle in World War One.”

Giulia, 30

Norma

Norma, as you can see from the picture, is Manchester's biggest Manchester United fan. Our Outreach team met Norma after she was referred by a neighbour who thought she needed a little help. It was a pleasure for our team to hear about her childhood growing up in Bolton and attending games since she was 12.

Through Winter Wellbeing we have supported Norma by:

- Purchasing and delivering a new fleece mattress topper, a thermal blanket and new bed socks;
- Adding her to our Social Club mailout, so she's able to start taking part in group activities with younger and older neighbours.

 **Manchester Cares**
Published by Amy Saunders [?] · 30 January · 🌐

Meet Norma, 74. Yesterday our outreach team dropped off a new fleece mattress topper, a fluffy blanket and some bed socks to help Norma stay warm when the weather takes a turn as part of Winter Wellbeing after Norma was referred by her neighbour. 📌

Norma went on to tell us all about her love for Manchester United. She's been a devout fan since she was 12, growing up in Bolton, and has hats, scarves, posters, memory books and this cosy fleece, signed by Juan Manuel Mata Garcia! 📷📖

She often goes to the pubs in the Printworks to watch the games and also loves watching a film at HOMEcr, where all the staff know her. Hopefully Norma will be coming along to Social Clubs with our community network soon to build new friendships (and maybe even find a new pal to pop to the pub with her!).

If you'd like to refer someone for help this winter, head to www.manchestercares.org.uk/older-neighbour-referral-form. ✨



Naheed

After meeting Naheed through door knocking and an Outreach Social Club at her housing scheme, we sat and had a cup of tea. We learnt lots about her experiences moving from Pakistan to London, until eventually settling in Manchester. She showed us her wonderful scarf collection, which she knits herself, and spoke about how she feels too scared to go outside during winter, as her walking stick slips on the wet ground.

 **Manchester Cares** @ManchesterCares · 18 Nov 2019

Last week we visited Naheed to drop off a fleece blanket as part of Winter Wellbeing. We chatted about her experiences moving from Pakistan to the UK and her marvellous scarf collection that she knits herself. ❄️



🗨️ 🔄 ❤️ 5 📌 📷

Through the Winter Wellbeing project:

- We made a referral to the Falls Prevention Team to see if they might be able to offer a better solution for her walking stick;
- We invited Naheed to come along to Manchester Cares' next crafty Social Club in Longsight, just round the corner from her.

Masood, 81



Manchester Cares @ManchesterCares · 18 Dec 2019

Older neighbours got together for some Christmassy Wreath making. 🌲

Everyone made their very own wreath to take home and Sylvia (84) said 'I've had fun- it keeps my mind busy!'



🗨️ 1 ❤️ 9 📤 📺



In November we met Masood after he was referred by the Care Navigation team. We chatted all about his exciting career as a taxi driver, once chauffeuring a famous movie star to and from The Palace Theatre, and thinking back to a time when pints were cheap, not £5 for a craft ale.

After chatting about his life in Manchester and his love for swimming, through the Winter Wellbeing project we:

- Arranged to drop off a fleece mattress topper to help him stay cosy at night on his thin mattress;
- Made a referral to the Falls Prevention team to see if they could help with his dodgy outdoor steps;
- Encouraged Masood to contact Manchester Move and find a housing scheme that could support him;
- Invited him along to our monthly Social Clubs – he always has everyone laughing during Craft Club in Longsight.

Christine, 68

Christine cares for her husband and recently had her pension credit and PIP withdrawn. Struggling to keep the house warm and living in just two rooms of the two-storey house in order to keep warm and with a reduced income. It was a delight getting to know Christine and spend time learning about her life growing up in Gorton.

Through the Winter Wellbeing project we:

- Dropped off a new, thick winter duvet, fleece, hat, gloves, scarf and thermos;
- Sourced a winter coat for her husband David who, after losing a lot of weight through treatment, struggled to stay warm when leaving the house for hospital appointments;
- Made a referral to LEAP so that they were able to offer energy advice and reduce Christine's monthly outgoings and explore more cost-effective options;
- Made a referral to Citizens Advice Manchester and secured money towards a new cooker so that she was able to prepare hot meals;
- Christine received a Winter Wellbeing grant of £50 to provide some immediate relief towards her gas and electricity meters;
- Added Christine to our monthly Social Club list so that she's able to take part in our upcoming Social Clubs around Gorton, including a trip to Gorton Monastery.

Charles, 69

Charles has been a long time member of Manchester Cares and this year he needed a little extra help over the coldest months of the year.

Charles mentioned to us that he was struggling to cook on his oven hob and that generally his home wasn't particularly warm and he'd like some help.

Through Winter Wellbeing we:

- Referred Charles to Citizens Advice Manchester for funds towards a new microwave;
- Made a referral to LEAP so that they were able to offer energy advice and reduce Charles' monthly outgoings and explore more cost-effective options;
- Delivered a new hat, gloves and hot water bottle to help Charles stay warm while he's out and about getting to his writing group, attending Manchester Cares' Social Clubs and going into town.



6. Project strengths

- On every measure, this year's project was bigger than last year's, with the exception of number of interactions:
 - We gave out **more than twice as many warm items as last year** – 131 this year compared with 50 last. This included even more tailored purchases of items, such as thermal layers for John, 78;
 - In total this year we created **391 interventions for 241 older neighbours**, compared with 283 interventions for 188 older neighbours last year;
 - **We reached many older people without family or social networks** – people who are often more difficult to identify – through proactive outreach in settings such as supermarkets, and by strengthening referral pathways. This proactive outreach involved us visiting 36 community events and spaces, carrying out 13 doorknocking sessions and running 9 'Outreach Social Clubs' in sheltered housing units;
 - Although we spoke to fewer older neighbours (394 this year, compared to 636 last year) more of those we spoke to went on to receive support, meaning we more effectively helped to spread the message about staying warm, active, healthy and connected during winter and reached those who needed our help;
- **We continued to innovate** – focussing our efforts on purchasing items and utilising grants on older neighbours' behalf to ensure they were most effective. For example, purchasing a clothes dryer for Vittorio, 77, so that he's able to dry his clothes and be comfortable;
- With devolution in Manchester there have been further opportunities and flexibility for **partnership projects**. This opportunity for collaboration has been one of the great strengths and improvements of this project. A particular success was a joint door knocking session with Buzz.

7. Partnerships

7.1 Working with Housing Associations and Local Health Organisations

This year we aimed to work more closely with local housing associations and health organisations.

Arawak Walton, One Manchester, S4B Housing and Street Doorknocking

Many sheltered housing schemes have diminishing levels of on-site staffing which has affected the quality of life for some residents, especially those over 85 and with additional needs. Through door knocking and running activities within schemes and

involving general needs housing, we aimed to meet older neighbours who may not be accessing services and are, therefore, experiencing increased isolation.

Following on from a recommendation within [this summary](#) we moved from door knocking solely within housing schemes towards general needs housing. These are homes that sit outside of a conventional scheme so don't provide a communal space for older neighbours and can often leave residents lacking connection to their local community.

In partnership with Arawak Walton:

- **Letters were sent to 95 general needs tenants** over the age of 65, describing our Winter Wellbeing project and encouraging people to get in touch if they needed support and to come along to Manchester Cares' 'Outreach Social Clubs' within their nearest housing schemes;
- We went on to **visit 27 homes** across Cheetham Hill, Rusholme and Longsight to meet neighbours on their doorsteps;
- We ran **2 'Outreach Social Clubs'** at Arawak Walton housing schemes including Desert Island Discs and Wreath/Table Decoration Making.

In partnership with One Manchester:

- We ran **2 'Outreach Social Clubs'** at One Manchester housing schemes.
 - At our Mince Pies and Mulled Wine club we met residents and arranged to deliver 19 warm items.
 - At our Hot Chocolate club we chatted about Winter Wellbeing and shared information about access to activities in the Gorton area.

In partnership with S4B:

- We **visited 22 homes** across Ardwick, meeting residents on their doorsteps and checking if they needed any items to help them stay warm.



7.2 Street door knocking

Alongside door knocking in partnership with housing associations, we wanted to see if visiting homes on private roads allowed us to meet more older neighbours who didn't have on-site staff or dedicated support workers from within a housing association that they could rely on, and so who may be even more disconnected from their community.

Across seven different doorknocking sessions in Ardwick, Fallowfield, Whalley Range, Longsight and Miles Platting we visited 128 homes and spoke to neighbours on their doorsteps about the Winter Wellbeing project. Although this did allow us to meet some brilliant older Mancunians, like Maureen and Linda who were long time neighbours and friends, and were going to convince each other to come along to a Social Club, the process was time consuming and didn't allow for targeted outreach to specifically meet individuals over 65.

7.3 Buzz Health Doorknocking and Other Health Organisations Partnerships

Door knocking has always been a huge part of Winter Wellbeing as it provides the opportunity to meet, connect with and take the time to build trust with older neighbours right on their doorsteps. This year we wanted to build on the community partnerships we already had and involve close partners in this vital work, in order to reach even more people.

We chose the neighbourhoods of Ardwick and Longsight to partner with Buzz Health. Together, our aim was to promote Winter Wellbeing to people over the age of 65, and to promote our volunteering opportunities to younger neighbours in the area, due to its heavy student population. Alongside these aims we promoted neighbourhood engagement meetings, run by Buzz, to all residents.

Across two days of door knocking we:

- **Knocked on 112 doors** across 7 streets in **Longsight**;
- **Knocked on 64 doors** on 5 streets in **Ardwick**.

Volunteer Emily also joined us during our door knocking sessions. This was the first time a volunteer had joined as part of an outreach engagement and was a great way to incorporate volunteers in another of Manchester Cares' programmes.



7.4 Outreach Social Club with St Joseph's Befriending

In partnership with St Joseph's Welfare and Befriending service we ran two activities. One event was before Winter Wellbeing started and focused on songs, memories and introducing the project. The second was flower arranging, and while neighbours were having a go and getting a taste for our Social Clubs, we arranged warm items we would deliver.



7.5 Community partnerships

We collaborated successfully with other organisations on 36 community events and partnerships. Some of the highlights included:

- Age Friendly Manchester included an excerpt about Winter Wellbeing in their newsletter – **15,000 copies** were distributed across the city.
- Across the Winter Wellbeing project we **attended 4 Expert Patient Programme Health Fairs**. These penultimate sessions follow on from a programme of support provided to individuals to support managing various health issues. At this final session, organisations are invited to present to the group and provide 'next steps' for participants. At the Christmas event, we also carried out a craft activity, encouraging participants to see what it's like getting involved in our Social Clubs.
- Attending a coffee morning at New Testament Church of God in Cheetham Hill and running a flower arranging activity to show attendees what our Social Clubs are like and **the variety of activities they can try out**.
- **Attending a cross-organisation Winter Warm Event** at Trafalgar Court housing scheme. Lots of organisations came together to share wellbeing and health advice to tenants and neighbours in the Chorlton and Whalley Range areas.
- Attending two events as part of **Self Care Week** in partnership with Health Development Coordinators in North and Central Manchester. One was at Morrisons in Openshaw and one was at Asda in Newton Heath. Both focussed on speaking to older neighbours about their health while they were shopping.



- **Visiting the regular lunch club** at the Stirling Centre in Newton Heath. We handed out 25 warm items and got to have lunch with and get to know neighbours there to invite them to be part of our Social Clubs programme.
- **Attending Winter Warmer and running a quiz** at Parish Church of Apostles in Miles Platting.

8. Recommendations for future projects

As with any project of this scale and with so many people and moving parts, there were challenges to overcome. Below are some of the challenges we faced in delivering the project in 2019/20, and some recommendations for next year's project. Tackling these ahead of time will put Manchester Cares in a position to identify and support even more older Mancunians next year.

Researching, planning and making contacts across the city is time-consuming

- Manchester Cares still has many connections to make with partners, and relationships to continue building. We missed some opportunities to do that this year due to time constraints or lack of planning.

Recommendation

- As the charity develops, the majority of partnership planning and preparation can take place well before the Winter Wellbeing project begins. This will allow the team to focus on outreach and immediate intervention follow-up during the coldest months.

Reaching neighbours most at risk of isolation through street door knocking

- Door knocking of private housing/streets allowed Manchester Cares' teams to meet neighbours that otherwise may not access our programmes or other health services. However, identifying which streets to spend time on and often meeting individuals who were not suitable for our programmes (e.g. students and young families) was time consuming – with little to no further action taken or impact achieved.

Recommendation

- We need to build relationships with the local council (as our sibling charities in The Cares Family do), to supply further information that could help us to identify which houses are home to residents who may be suitable for our programmes.

Supporting people with English as a second language

- An ongoing challenge for Manchester Cares is best supporting those where English isn't an individual's first language and how we not only deliver the aims and ambitions of the project but also go on to support those neighbours long term and with the same personable approach.

Recommendation

- Next year we will make links with organisations who can support us to reach all of Manchester's diverse groups. This could include creating leaflets that are in different languages, leading clubs in different

languages, and working with volunteers or partners to carry out Winter Wellbeing visits in different languages.

9. Manchester Cares' Covid-19 response

Manchester Cares suspended face-to-face programmes on March 13th and put in place emergency Covid-19 response programmes. From March 13th to March 31st, a time that usually would be dedicated to Winter Wellbeing response work, we made **168 check-in calls with older neighbours** and made 5 deeper interventions, including practical and emotional support in a time of anxiety. We quickly prepared to carry out a food and prescription delivery pilot and developed a new Phone a Friend project, linking older and younger neighbours for regular phone calls. Between March 13th and March 31st, 4 new phone friendships were made across the generations.

Along with the wider Cares Family (which includes North London Cares, South London Cares, East London Cares and Liverpool Cares), Manchester Cares produced an Alone Together pack of daily activities which in March was sent out to 556 older people across the City of Manchester. This work will be evaluated elsewhere, but we include it here to emphasise the importance of the relationships we built during the Winter Wellbeing project: by identifying people at risk of isolation during the winter months, we have been able to quickly support some of the people most isolated by lockdown during the Covid-19 crisis.

10. Conclusion

Over a third of the 394 people Manchester Cares engaged with through this year's Winter Wellbeing project took up our offer of either extra social connection or practical help. This demonstrates that our proactive outreach can add huge value to collective community provision and to the lives of individual Mancunians.

Our knowledge and expertise wouldn't exist without the partnerships and strong lines of communication we have with local organisations in the health, private, and voluntary sectors. As the UK continues to adapt to reductions in statutory services – and responds to the Covid-19 pandemic – it has fallen on the shoulders of the community to support people who are falling through the gaps.

This is a significant challenge that no organisation can tackle alone. It's thanks to our community partners that we can reach more people each year; that we receive referrals of older neighbours – 52 this year – who benefit from our activities year-round; and that we can strive to achieve personal and relational support for every individual who comes our way. Whether it's working with other community groups, deepening our connections with GP surgeries or growing our work with housing associations, it's important to maintain an adaptable approach and respond to opportunities and needs as they arise.

Not only is the Winter Wellbeing project important to support those individuals who are in need of help, but it is a means of **providing reassurance and strengthening**

the ties of community in a rapidly changing city for older neighbours who perhaps don't need practical support but have lost trust in their city or their neighbours. We work hard to generate trust throughout our neighbourhoods, having face-to-face conversations without time limits, and cutting through bureaucracies. This in itself enables people to feel better-connected and more likely to ask for help in the future. Through our proactive outreach we continue to prevent situations from becoming emergency cases and to equip individuals with the knowledge they need to help themselves.

We have also learned a great deal for an even **more ambitious Winter Wellbeing project next year**. Greater planning and better integration with local authorities, health services, and other community organisations working with older people will help us to connect even more older Mancunians to the support they need, as well as **connecting them to their younger neighbours** to enjoy time, laughter and new experiences. **In a time of rapid change, this sharing of wisdom, knowledge and emotional resilience across the generations will become even more important.**

As Manchester continues to change, leaving some older people feeling **left out or left behind**, and other local services continue to transform, our offer of practical, social, emotional and tailored support is more crucial than ever. For the investment that goes in, the results that come out can be far-reaching and long-lasting. By taking forward recommendations included in this report and strengthening and growing our network of partners, we hope to reach and improve the lives of even more of our older Mancunians next year.

May 2020