



MANCHESTER CARES

WINTER WELLBEING
2018/19 EVALUATION REPORT

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1.0 Introduction

For many across the City of Manchester, winter is a time to get the woolly blankets out, cosy up on the sofa with friends and a cup of tea, and binge watch the latest boxset.

But for many of our older neighbours in particular, winter is dominated by short days and icy pavements. This can make getting out – even to do the weekly food shop – 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 second Winter Wellbeing project in October 2018, after a successful pilot in winter 2017/18. From Moston, Harpurhey and Miles Platting, down to Ancoats, Hulme and Levenshulme, and everywhere in between, we have connected with older neighbours who are most at risk of being left behind as the days get shorter and nights get colder through proactive outreach.

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 programme and [Community Fundraising](#) work, our proactive outreach identifies older people at risk of isolation and connects them to new experiences and relationships year-round, as well as to interventions which can help people to stay connected at an otherwise difficult time.

"I always look forward to spending time with young people like you." Graham, 82



1.1 Objectives

The project 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 relevant;



- **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 our Love Your Neighbour programme.

1.2 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 blankets, 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 around people who need them.



"It's really cold at home, and I'm excited to receive these items and use the blanket." Shamsun, 67

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**, including in local sheltered housing units;
- **Working with housing providers** to distribute leaflets and other materials promoting our work;
- **Attending and speaking at community events** and groups;
- **Working closely with GPs**, pharmacies and local businesses;
- **Building community partnerships** with other local organisations.

“I could do with getting out more, I’m a sociable person but I’ve only been getting out to the shops.” Jackie, 72

2.0 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 2018 to March 2019**:

- **636 face-to-face conversations** with older people were held;
- **188 older neighbours received further help**, with **283 interventions** being made;
- **15 people received Winter Wellbeing grants** of between **£30 and £100**, with a total of **£974** awarded to those individuals;
- **10 older neighbours have been matched with a younger neighbour** for weekly visits through Manchester Cares’ Love Your Neighbour programme;
- **50 warm items were delivered**, including blankets, hats, gloves and scarves, to individuals who felt cold in their homes;
- **109 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;
- **692 younger and older neighbours attended 67 social clubs** between October and March, (with 6 of these taking place in GP surgeries, actively promoted to patients through the surgery);
- **Over 500 leaflets** sharing information about the Winter Wellbeing project support, health messages and Manchester Cares’ activities were **distributed**

across the City of Manchester;

- We **attended 52 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 **visited a further 22 sheltered housing units** and retirement housing schemes to speak with older neighbours about Winter Wellbeing and our year-round activities;
- The majority of people who received an intervention were aged between 65 and 74 years of age (45%). 14% were between 75 and 80 years old, and a further 33% were aged **80 and over**;
- We also supported 16 people who were below the age of 65 – however, this is not our target demographic.

3.0 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.

3.1 Norman, 68 – Higher Blackley

Norman was referred for Winter Wellbeing support by a member of the team at the Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust. When we first met Norman, he was facing health and housing issues and he didn't have close friends or family to rely on for support.

Norman relies on keeping his bungalow warm to stay well. His Personal Independence Payments had been cut, his bills had skyrocketed due to an inefficient and faulty boiler, and he was at breaking point.

Through the Winter Wellbeing project:

- Norman received a Winter Wellbeing grant of £100 to put towards gas and electricity bills;
- On his behalf, we reported a broken gate to his housing provider, which is now in the process of being repaired;



Norman and David at Norman's first Manchester United game in 30 years

- We identified his nearest grit store (as he was worried about the pavement outside of his flat getting icy);
- We referred him to LEAP (the energy and money saving service) to provide advice on heating his home, and we have been in regular communication with Citizens Advice and Northwards Housing to discuss his boiler;
- Norman has attended Manchester Cares' Dance Club, which previously he had said he wouldn't have the confidence to travel to, thanks to support booking a taxi. He has also been to our business visit at FastSigns where he made coasters that now sit proudly on his coffee table for when he has a brew;
- Norman has been matched with volunteer David, 35, for weekly visits through our Love Your Neighbour programme. For a friendship which started with a shared passion for Manchester United, their first outing just had to be a match – Norman's first in over 30 years. Norman and David have continued to visit each other every week to share time, laughter and a coffee!



Over in #HigherBlackley Norman (68) and David (35) got to know each other for the first time through sharing stories of their mutual passion @ManUtd. They will be hanging out each week as part of our Love Your Neighbour programme.



9:41 am - 28 Jan 2019

Kathleen, 94 – Harpurhey

Kathleen, 94, lives on her own, has no family living in the UK, and when we first met her she struggled to get out and about other than to pay her bills once every two weeks at the corner shop just down the road from her home.

Kathleen was referred to us for Winter Wellbeing support by Northwards Housing.

Through Winter Wellbeing we have supported Kathleen by:

- Purchasing and delivering thermal vests, tights, a blanket and a hat, glove and scarf set to help Kathleen stay warm in her home and when out and about paying her bills;



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We met Kathleen (94) through our Outreach in Harpurhey. We've recently delivered a blanket, fleece hat and tights to Kathleen to help her stay cosy whilst watching the soaps over Christmas time. Thank you to Northwards Housing for introducing us to Kathleen!

If you'd like to meet wonderful older neighbours in the City of Manchester, sign up to Volunteer with us. Just head to www.manchestercares.org.uk/get-involved. ✨



- Offering information and advice around moving home; supporting Kathleen to explore assisted accommodation or a bungalow that might be more suited to her current health needs, which include arthritis in her knees.

Kathleen was also matched with Amy through our Love Your Neighbour programme and Amy has been visiting once a week ever since. They've shared lots of lovely stories about Amy's family and Kathleen's late husband Cliff's role in the armed forces. They will soon be heading out on their first trip together, to Bury Market, where Kathleen used to do her shopping but has not been to for many years.



Amy and Kathleen at one of their first Love Your Neighbour visits

Nora, 79 – Levenshulme

We re-connected with Nora during this year's Winter Wellbeing project after meeting her at a coffee morning at a sheltered housing unit in Levenshulme. Initially Nora was reluctant to get involved with our programmes, but after we invited her to our first women's only chair-based exercise class she was throwing plenty of punches and made plenty of connections during boxercise.

Nora is now looking forward to being matched up through our Love Your Neighbour programme with someone she can share her love for darts, snooker and bowls with!



Robert, 65 – Clayton

Robert was referred to Manchester Cares by the North Manchester Be Well service. Robert suffers from a number of medical conditions including arthritis and heart problems. He had reached crisis point when referred to us as he could no longer afford to pay for his gas and electricity.

We supported Robert by:

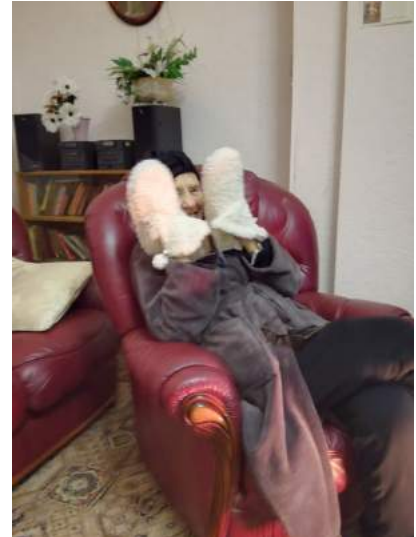
- Helping him order and fill in a PIP (Personal Independence Payment) adjustment form;
- Taking him to top up both his gas and electricity meter cards with winter grants £15 each to cover his fuel usage until his next Universal Credit payment came in;

- Assisting him to write a letter to the Department of Work and Pensions to support a bereavement payment for his late mother's funeral;
- Signposting him to a Reddish fishing group to help him reconnect with a hobby that he had previously enjoyed regularly but since his health has deteriorated had found it hard to get back into.

Imelda, 75 – Fallowfield

Imelda was already involved in our Love Your Neighbour programme after being referred to Manchester Cares by her GP in spring 2018, but in monitoring her friendship match, we identified that she could benefit from some extra practical support in her home. We supported Imelda by:

- Delivering warm items to help her stay warm at home – including some new insulated slippers;
- Speaking on her behalf to Places for People, her housing provider, about improving the insulation around her doors and windows to prevent drafts.



Imelda with her brand new slippers, delivered by the outreach team to help her stay warm over the coldest months of the year

Imelda continues to be supported by our team through her Love Your Neighbour friendship with Beth and the High Impact Primary Care Team.

"I'm going to get a duvet cover to keep me warm. I just use old blankets and clothes. So I can use the grant to keep warm." Charles, 68

Maureen (name changed to protect identity), 70

We met Maureen through a referral from her case worker. Suffering with severe anaemia and hypertension, it is especially important that Maureen keeps her home warm. We delivered a pack of warm items to her home, along with an £80 Winter Wellbeing grant to go towards her gas and electricity top-ups.

During our visits to Maureen, we identified that she had experienced financial abuse. Supporting Maureen through this, we liaised with the police, victim support, Social Services and her bank. Without getting to know Maureen and building a trusting relationship and continually checking in with her, this problem may have been missed. This highlights the importance of treating every person who accesses the support as an individual, with no time limits and person-centred solutions.

4.0 Project Strengths

- This year's project was bigger than last year's, on all measures:
 - We gave out more than twice as many warm items as last year – 50 this year compared with 23 last. This included more tailored purchases of items, such as tights and vests for Kathleen, 95;
 - Due to the generosity of Manchester Cares' supporters donating through our Double Your Difference online fundraising campaign, this year we gave out 15 grants totalling £974, compared with seven grants totalling £560 last year;
 - In total this year we created 283 interventions for 188 older neighbours, compared with 178 interventions for 126 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 52 community events and spaces, 22 more than last year, and a further 22 visits to sheltered housing units, compared to just six last year;
 - We also held 80% more conversations than last year, helping to spread the message about staying warm, active, healthy and connected during winter to many more people;
- We continued to innovate – using Manchester Cares' 12 months of experience and knowledge to re-engage with neighbours throughout the project who we had not heard from in some time to check in with them over the phone, as well as to invite them to our activities again;
- With devolution in Manchester there have been further opportunities and flexibility for partnership projects, and this collaboration has been one of the great strengths and improvements of this project. A particular strength of this year's project was our work with Primary Care organisations.

4.1 Working with GP surgeries

This year we partnered with three GP surgeries. We know people go to their GP surgeries for social interaction. One in ten GP appointments is taken by an older person with no other condition than that they're lonely. But GPs are stretched and appointments are limited. That's why we joined forces with two practices in particular – Cornbrook Medical Practice in Hulme and Robert Darbishire Practice in Rusholme.



Cornbrook Medical Practice

In October, we organised a *Coffee & Quiz* social club in the waiting room of Cornbrook Medical Practice, providing a familiar space for one-off social interaction and the opportunity for patients to find out about other support and activities in their area, including those offered by Manchester Cares. Right in the waiting room, with lots of brews and cake and a quiz, Alan, 74, Maureen, 71, and Mary, 73, all met one another for the first time, and left knowing more people within their community.

Thanks to a brilliant partnership with Cornbrook Medical Practice:

- Over 300 individuals were sent a letter or a text, not only inviting them to the practice for the social club, but also sharing information about our Winter Wellbeing project;
- Over 20 people – aged between 66 and 83 – attended the Coffee & Quiz afternoon;
- We connected with a further 15 members of the community who couldn't attend on the day but who wanted to find out more about keeping warm, active, healthy and connected.

“Thank you for putting on such a fun activity. I didn't know what to expect, and nearly didn't come, but I'm so glad I did. It's great to meet new people that live nearby.” **Mary, 74**

At the quiz we met **Josephine, 83**. Josephine was spending over £100 every month on her gas and electricity to keep her home warm – and keeping warm is essential for her to look after her health and cope with long term health conditions that affect her ability to get out independently. After visiting Josephine at home, we were able to award a Winter Wellbeing grant to help her pay for her high heating bills over the coldest months of the year, and to go towards purchasing a winter coat to enable her to stay warm when out collecting her shopping.

Alongside Josephine, of the 35 patients we have met through Cornbrook, six went on to receive Winter Wellbeing grants between £60 and £100 and four have gone on to be part of our Love Your Neighbour programme, including Believe.

Believe, 75

Believe couldn't make it to our *Coffee & Quiz* activity, but her daughter got in touch with us after she received a letter from the surgery introducing Manchester Cares. With the exception of her mum Bakengela, who is in 90s, Believe's family



Figure 1 Patients from Cornbrook Medical Practice enjoying an afternoon of cakes, coffee and quiz-ing!

all live in London or outside of the UK. Being a French speaker and struggling to speak much English, Believe had lost a sense of community since moving up to Manchester for political asylum.

Through the Winter Wellbeing project, we were able to:

- Work with a French-speaking volunteer to make an initial visit to Believe and talk through the problems and feelings she was experiencing;
- Lift Believe's water meter cover, which she had been struggling with alone, so she could take the meter reading and discuss payment issues she had been having with her utility company;
- Refer Believe to NESTAC (New Step for African Community) to seek support in translation and advice on benefits and carers;
- Match Believe with French-speaking volunteer Eugenia. The pair meet up weekly and love to chat about current goings-on in the UK and beyond and their shared loves of cooking and travel.

Euphema, 76

Euphema got in touch with Manchester Cares after spotting our leaflet at her GP.

Euphema had previously been very active, meeting people and making friends at her local exercise classes. However, since suffering with arthritis in her knees, she'd lost her confidence walking out and about and attending her swimming classes.

We delivered a pack of warm items to her door, sat and had a cup of tea and discussed how she could get involved in our activities.

With encouragement that she could be supported to and from social clubs, and that there was no pressure to take part in strenuous activities, Euphema has been along to Cooking Club, our *Coffee & Quiz* at Cornbrook Medical Practice and Manchester Cares' first birthday party.

She has also been matched with volunteer Dami, who she spends time with socially each week through our Love Your Neighbour programme.



Euphema with her warm items

The Robert Darbshire Practice

We have also taken our *Coffee & Quiz* activity into the waiting room of The Robert Darbshire Practice in Rusholme.

We welcomed nine older neighbours to take part in our activity, with six going on to sign up to our programme of social clubs. It was great to deepen our connection with another neighbourhood in Manchester and to reach neighbours who see their GP surgery as a safe and trusted space and may not usually access social activities for fear of feeling out of place or struggling to get to community venues.



Neighbours at the Robert Darbshire Practice enjoying the Coffee & Quiz afternoon!

The Arch Medical Practice

The Arch Medical Practice was another brilliant Primary Care partner. During October and November, we reached out to local GP Practices to see if we could connect with older neighbours that were invited to get a flu jab at their local drop in. At this practice in Hulme we met a wonderful older neighbour called Yvonne. Yvonne shared lots of her own top tips and home remedies for battling the flu – including grating ginger and lemon into hot water and topping up with a little spoonful of honey. We spoke to a further seven older neighbours about our Winter Wellbeing project and the activities and connections we could offer year-round.

By striking up these conversations with people like Yvonne – focussing on people's stories and building trust – we are able to build long-lasting relationships and make interventions which can improve not only the winter for our older neighbours, but the rest of the year too.

- Thanks to our partnership with The Arch Medical Practice, Manchester Cares' referral form was added to EMIS, the integrated care pathway, streamlining and increasing referrals into our programmes, year-round.

Another project strength was our connections with other clinical partners and health-related voluntary and community groups.

Our partners at Manchester City Council, local healthcare providers, Good Neighbour groups and other organisations are, of course, already on high alert during the cold weather. Our Winter Wellbeing project aims to complement their vital work by offering an agile, proactive community outreach dimension and helping to connect people to existing activities



including, but not limited to, ours. We worked with some fantastic clinical partners and medical professionals, including:

- Wythenshawe Hospital – OPAL House
- Manchester Health and Care Commissions’s Lung Health Screening in north and east Manchester
- Wythenshawe Hospital Care Navigators
- Expert Patient graduate events

Community Events

We partnered successfully with other organisations on 52 community events. Some of the highlights included:

- Places of Welcome’s coffee morning at St James’ Church, Moss Side;
- Running a Manchester-themed quiz at the Winter Warmer event at the Grange Community Centre in Beswick;
- Hosting a special ‘By-the-Seaside’ edition of Manchester Cares’ *Desert Island Discs* social club at St Edmunds’ stay-cation event in Whalley Range;
- Another Winter Warmer at Trinity Community Centre in Fallowfield;
- Hosting Easter-themed decoration making and providing Winter Wellbeing and Social Club information at Levenshulme Market;
- Attending a coffee morning hosted by neighbours at Moseley Court in Levenshulme.



5.0 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 2018/19, 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

- Just a year and a half old, Manchester Cares still has many connections to make with partners, and relationships to continue building.

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

- We spent a large amount of time attending community events. However, people who attend these events or who live in sheltered housing units generally have better access to support and social interaction already.

Recommendation

- We need to continue to identify older neighbours who live in private and social housing, as opposed to those in retirement schemes where often support and social activity is already on offer. Strengthening partnerships with Primary Care will help us to do this.

Identifying people aged under 65 who needed support

- Whilst our Winter Wellbeing focusses on helping older neighbours over the age of 65, we met 15 people between the ages of 55 and 64 who required help this winter. Many lived alone and had complex or multiple health conditions or limited mobility. This is unsurprising as the number of people living with long term conditions and disabilities in Manchester is higher than the national average.

Recommendation

- Next year we will consider this when looking at the capacity needed to deliver the project and when discussing partnerships to ensure we are better connected to services that can provide appropriate support to people outside of our target group.

Supporting people with English as a second language

- We recognised over the course of the project that we need to make better links to ensure the demographics of older neighbours we offer help to reflects the diversity of Manchester as a whole. We met neighbours whose first language was not English and we couldn't deliver the aims and ambitions of the project to them as well as we would have liked.

Recommendation

- Next year we will make links with organisations who can support us to reach all of Manchester's diverse groups and will consider creating leaflets translated into other languages. This could include creating leaflets that are in a second language, leading clubs in a different language, and working with a volunteer or partner to carry out Winter Wellbeing visits in another language.

6.0 Conclusion

It is clear from Manchester Cares' 2018/19 Winter Wellbeing project that our proactive outreach can add huge value to collective community provision and to the lives of individual Mancunians. At a time when winter pressures on the NHS and social services continue to grow, and GPs are seeing between [one and five people a day](#) with no other condition than loneliness, proactive outreach and highly personal community interaction are more important than ever.

Almost one in three of the 636 people we engaged with took up our offer of either extra social connection or practical help.

Meanwhile the reaction from older people who didn't require further assistance – and their relatives – was overwhelmingly positive, suggesting that as well as providing interventions that both help to prevent and solve problems, the project is a means of **providing reassurance and strengthening the ties of community in a rapidly changing city.**

We also found through the course of the project, as awareness of the work increased, that people were identifying neighbours in their community who might benefit from **some extra connection** and passing our contact details on. This reinforces that people within communities want to connect and help each other.

Our Winter Wellbeing project continues to embed a preventative approach whereby **practical, social and emotional issues** are identified before they become emergencies – and whereby people learn how they can get the support or connections they need to live more fulfilling lives. We will continue to connect people to our Social Clubs and Love Your Neighbour programmes to help them achieve that.

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 and health services, as well as with other community organisations working with older people, will help us to **connect even more older Mancunians next year to the support they need, and to their younger neighbours to enjoy time, laughter and new experiences.**

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 personalised support is even more crucial. For the investment that goes in, the results are far-reaching and long-lasting. Next year, taking forward recommendations included in this report, and strengthening partnerships with even more of the fantastic organisations working in our city, we hope to reach and improve the lives of even more of our older neighbours.

“Thank you, you’ve been a great help getting me sorted.” Joyce, 81

April 2019