

APM for the parish of Badgworth – 15th March 2021

The past 12 months has been very challenging and all the Village and Community Agents have had to adapt to a digital way of working with our clients. At the beginning of lockdown in March 2020, we worked with the GP surgeries and the County Council, and each of the 5 districts in Somerset contacted all the residents that were asked to shield. We worked with these residents to ensure they had access to food and medication as and when required.

I worked with the local Parish Clerks and Helping Hands support groups were set up to support residents. Badgworth, Tarnock and Biddisham either had existing email groups or new WhatsApp groups were set up.

A food resilience task force was set up and we have been fortunate in having large trays of ambient food donated to us along with vegetable boxes on a weekly basis. We also had Christmas isolation boxes that we could donate to our vulnerable clients. Our agents have also signed up to Neighbourly which is surplus food for charities to collect food which is either on or just past the sell by date to distribute to families and individuals in need. The food is collected from Aldi in Highbridge every Tuesday morning.

Social distancing measures have meant that our usual Talking Café events had to be temporarily suspended and moved digitally live on Facebook each day at 11am. An agent from each district hosts an event every day offering advice and support for staying safe, providing information about important services such as housing, finance and adult social care. Over the last few months, we have also had guest speakers from different organisations. All sessions are recorded and can be viewed after the event on our Facebook page.

We have also continued to expand our agents and Sedgemoor now has 14 agents working with the GP surgeries, Adult Social Care and specialist agents working with clients who have Learning Difficulties and Mental Health issues.

North Sedgemoor surgeries set up a daily multi-disciplinary team meeting at the start of lockdown and the village agents have been attending these every day. These meetings have been invaluable as we can discuss specific clients with the team who include GP's, Adult Social Care, Rehab Team, Mental health Team and Palliative Care. This has enabled us to have a speedy resolution and a holistic approach to the clients' issues.

Our Home First Community Agents have expanded with 6 agents working at Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital and I continue to work with Burnham-on-sea Community Hospital. The role is to work with the staff at the hospital to ensure a patient's discharge from hospital to home is timely and accurate in line with their needs for when they return home. This ensures there is no bed blocking and the agents can work with external providers to make sure everything is in place for when they arrive home.

I have increased my hours to 28 a week and work Monday – Thursday supporting clients across my 8 villages. It has been challenging adapting to working digitally and not visiting clients in their home, however, I have continued to provide outcomes to clients successfully.

All agents have been offered their first vaccine and are booked in for their second in April 2021. We await to hear when we can resume visiting our clients at home.

Kim Wilcox