

BelongLife

AUTUMN 2021

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Word from the team

This issue, Stacey McCann, Chief Operating Officer, looks at Belong's success over an eventful summer, as well as welcoming additions to the operations management team and the announcement of Belong's first village with an on-site, intergenerational children's nursery, set to feature in Belong Chester when it opens in early 2022.

Firstly, in what has now become a regular update, we can report that 88% of colleagues have been fully vaccinated and we're aiming for 100%, ahead of the government's November deadline.

Also in Covid-related news, Belong is privileged to have been recognised for our work during the pandemic, taking home the Social Care Covid Hero Team Award at the Great North West Care Awards, with judges highlighting the "culture of transparency" our people have created during an exceptional 18 months. Some of our colleagues at Belong Crewe and Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme were also recognised in individual awards, for which we congratulate their outstanding contribution to supporting our residents.

As team Great Britain brought home many medals from Tokyo 2020, you can enjoy reading about our customers' own podium success at their Belong 2021 games – just one of the many heartening stories from our villages over the past few months.

Looking ahead, we are delighted that Belong Chester has been granted planning permission for an on-site intergenerational nursery at the village. Working with national charity, Ready Generations, the pioneering concept will be the first of its kind in the North West and will create a shared environment where children and older people can actively spend time together building meaningful relationships and connections.

In preparation for the opening, colleague recruitment at Belong Chester is gaining momentum and we also have many wonderful roles to further strengthen our existing villages and Belong at Home teams. Be sure to visit the website to see the career development opportunities available, and please do share with anyone who springs to mind, as we continue to grow our Belong family.

Stacey McCann
Chief Operating Officer

Belong welcomes new additions

Over the past year, we have strengthened our operations management team, creating two new positions and welcoming Sue Goldsmith and Ali Gopaul as Operations Managers to provide additional support for all our villages and services.

With a combined experience in care of almost 50 years, they bring a complementary skillset that will be of great benefit to the organisation's future and we invite everyone to join us in giving them a warm Belong welcome.

“.....
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Meet Sue Goldsmith

Susan, or Sue, as she likes to be known, joined us at the end of 2020, with responsibility for driving quality at our Cheshire and Staffordshire villages: Belong Crewe, Belong Macclesfield, Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme and Belong Warrington. She is also supporting the development of hospitality, catering and our Admiral Nurse service.

With over thirty years of experience, Sue honed her expertise across both frontline nursing and senior management roles. Originally working as a mental health nurse on acute admissions wards, she moved into the adult social care sector in 1994 where she was later appointed Head of Dementia and Head of Care Improvement at one of the UK's largest care operators. A trained dementia care mapper, Sue was key to implementing the operator's first dementia care model and developing

its successor framework.

Most recently, Sue worked as the Director of Care Quality and Dementia for a care coaching consultancy, which involved enhancing the operations of care providers and supporting them to achieve Outstanding ratings from industry regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Sue's achievements in this space have been widely recognised across the industry, with her work published in a range of academic papers, and she shared her experiences as a contributing author of an Amazon top-selling book focused on person-centred dementia care.

Speaking of her appointment, Sue Goldsmith, said: "I am delighted to be part of Belong's new ops team and to have joined the organisation at this incredibly important time, both in terms of dealing with Covid-19 and



preparing for expansion, with the imminent opening of two new villages. It is a great opportunity to build on Belong's vision to create the best possible experiences and outcomes for customers and care teams, and I look forward to supporting Belong to accomplish this."

Meet Ali Gopaul

Ali Gopaul joined Belong in August, taking on oversight of our Greater Manchester locations: Belong Atherton, Belong Morris Feinmann and Belong Wigan, and working closely with teams there to build on the success of these Outstanding or Good rated villages. He will also lead on working with the organisation's team of specialist fitness instructors to develop the exercise provision through our on-site state-of-the-art exercise studios.

Having enjoyed over 18 years in care and with an MSc Health and Social Care Management qualification, Ali comes well-equipped with a deep knowledge and vast experience of the sector to meet Belong's exceptional standards of care provision.

Originally from Mauritius, he grew up around a family of healthcare professionals, who sparked Ali's passion for helping others and seeking a career in care. His work history includes working

for Bradford District Council, managing day care for adults with physical and mental health disabilities, before moving into management roles in the private sector.

After heading up care providers as Registered Manager, Ali broadened his experience, taking on operational roles in older people's and dementia care and raising standards in nursing and residential settings.

In his most recent role, he was awarded a personal certificate of recognition from the High Sheriff of Lancashire for his exceptional service to the community during the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst managing a residential and dementia care home for one of the UK's largest charity care providers.

Outside of his work, Ali continues supporting others, most notably, helping to set up a centre to feed



the homeless, as well as teaching underprivileged children. His fluency in seven languages, including Hindi,

Urdu, French and Italian have helped him to forge strong relationships with customers.

Speaking of his appointment, Ali Gopaul, said: "I'm thrilled to be joining Belong; I share the organisation's values and philosophy, and am an advocate for the village model. I look forward to building on our reputation and the high-quality care we offer our customers, their families, and local communities."

Belong Chief Operating Officer, Stacey McCann, added: "Sue and Ali have a strong track record of success in the social care sector, and we are thrilled to have them on board at Belong. We created these roles to maintain and drive the highest standards of care as we continue to expand as a group, and we have every confidence that Sue and Ali will help achieve this."

A Customer's View

Nothing is more important to Belong than our customers, which is why we love hearing about their experience.

For this issue of Belong Life, we spoke to Ken Edwards, 74, resident of Patriot Household and Chief Gardener at Belong Crewe.

If you want to catch up with Ken, the best place to find him is in the village's dementia-friendly garden. Despite living with muscular dystrophy and using a wheelchair, that doesn't stop him spending much of his time working on the garden's raised flower beds and sharing his gardening expertise with others.

Chief Gardener

Ken originally came to Belong Crewe for a week's respite stay. It was when his wife and carer, Pam, got ill that Ken moved into the village on a full-time basis two years ago. Sadly, Pam has since passed away, and after coming to terms with this loss, Ken continues to make the most of village life, supported by those around him.

Back in April, experience co-ordinator, Jess Butler, set-up 'Belong in Bloom', a club for all green-fingered customers to join and Ken was amongst the first to sign up. After investing a lot of time tending to the garden's fruit and vegetable patch, herb garden and even helping to up-cycle some outdoor furniture, Ken quickly became known as 'Chief Gardener' throughout the village.

Much to Ken's delight, he was even presented with his very own overalls to wear, with his new nickname emblazoned on the back. He said at the time: "This group has brought me a lot of happiness; everyone is working well as a team and I especially enjoy teaching the experience day team new things and I am learning a lot from them too."

And as Chief Gardener, Ken has some ambitious plans for the future. "I'd like to plant lots of different bulbs all the residents and tenants will recognise, including



daffodils, tulips and Lily of the Valley. Also, what I call 'old fashioned' flowers from childhood days, such as sweet peas and wallflowers — lots of colour to ignite everyone's senses and bring back happy memories."

"It's always nice to keep the garden looking colourful, clean and tidy, and of course, safety is the top priority in the garden."

A new lease of life

On the occasions when Ken can be persuaded away from his plants, he enjoys activities around the village, including dominoes, and more recently he has been enjoying time in the on-site gym, with fitness instructor, Max, re-teaching him to box, having enjoyed the sport in his youth. Ken says, "It's given me a new lease of life, it's absolutely fantastic."

Expressing his enthusiasm for Belong colleagues, he tells us: "I love every member of staff here — they're like brothers and sisters to me. They're always so happy and can't do enough for you."

If you would like to contribute to the next 'A Customer's View' column, please pass on your details to a member of staff or email the editor at: tracy.brookes@belong.org.uk

Village News

Belong Atherton paves the way for nurses with pilot apprentice programme

As students prepared to return to their studies in September, Kelly Haddock, Trainee Nurse Associate at Belong Atherton, urges more young people to consider less conventional routes into a nursing career.

Kelly, 33, from Leigh, began her care career over a decade ago, initially working in the catering team at the village, before being inspired to train as a carer, then progressing to Lead Senior Support Worker, heading-up a night team of 24 colleagues. Notably, her supportive nature shone through when she was named 'Mentor of the Year' at Belong's Champion Awards 2020, which recognise colleagues who have made an exceptional contribution to village life.

Reflecting on her first year, Kelly said: "There are an increasing number of new training options being created for people, who like me, discover their nursing vocation later on in their career. I've been able to build on my experience as a support worker and, once the foundation degree is complete, I'll be able to work towards becoming a registered nurse."

As a Trainee Nursing Associate (TNA), Kelly works in the village's specialist nursing team, supporting the needs of Belong residents, whilst receiving extensive training

and gaining the clinical knowledge and experience required for nursing associate status.

Whereas on the traditional routes into the nursing profession, trainees often gain their practical experience in hospital settings, the programme gives students the opportunity to work in all fields of nursing: adult, mental health, children's, and learning disability, meaning it is designed to be tailored to any area of the profession. By working in adult social care at Belong, Kelly is provided the chance to look after older people, including those living with dementia, as part of her training.

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The apprenticeship role is relatively new to social and primary care and is currently being piloted in care settings with nursing provision, as well as GP surgeries. Led by University of Salford and regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the training posts are offered at Belong Atherton and Belong Wigan, which were selected to administer the work-based assessment based on an extensive relationship with the university, their track record in developing nurses, as well as top credentials including 'Outstanding' CQC ratings and the 'Gold' Investors in People accreditation.

Kelly Haddock says: "I'm so happy and very thankful that Belong is championing this new Trainee Nursing Associate role; it's the best of both worlds, studying alongside working at the village. I previously studied at university but had no idea what my long-term career would look like and Belong has provided me with a career for life."

Rebecca Woodcock, General Manager at Belong Atherton, added: "We're thrilled to be working with the University of Salford and pilot this special programme which opens up an exciting new option for nurses. Part of our ethos is to develop careers of aspiring carers and nurses and so we provide numerous opportunities — even entry level options for those without experience in care.

"For example, we already have nurses who, like Kelly, started out as support workers, as well as colleagues who are with us on short-term placements. Kelly is another example of someone who has built her skill set and is now extending this into nursing, building on her career caring for others."



Memory Lane...

Belong Atherton resident Ken Tunstall's career as Consulting Engineer has taken him all over the world, from Mexico to New Zealand and India to Hong Kong, including working for NASA. He shared some of his experiences for this issue of *Belong Life*.

Ken was born in Davyhulme in Trafford, Manchester, in 1943. His mother was a machinist in the clothing industry, and his father was an engineer. One of three siblings, including his sisters, Muriel and Frieda, and part of a large family, with many cousins, he describes his childhood as 'quite hectic'.

Family business

After leaving school, where his favourite subjects were art and science, Ken followed in his parents' footsteps and pursued a career in engineering, with an apprenticeship at Metrovicks at Trafford Park leading to a long career at Kennedy and Donkin, and later Parsons Brinckerhoff.

A music lover (he taught himself to play the guitar and banjo), Ken frequented rock 'n' roll clubs in Manchester from the 60s. It was at one of these venues that he met his wife, Mavis, and the couple went on to have two sons, Jonathan and David.

Ken's work as a power generation consultant would take him all over the world, including Australia, India, Spain, New Zealand, Mexico and Hong Kong. He even worked as a consultant to NASA for the quality programme of the Space Shuttle. A favourite country was Italy for its food and wine.

While travelling, he had several brushes with danger, but it seems like fate was on his side each time. He beat Malaria, had a close call with a rattlesnake in Mexico, and survived an earthquake in India and several malfunctions of aircraft that he was on board. On one occasion, the wing of the plane he was travelling on caught fire and it had to make an emergency landing. Another lucky escape came when he missed a flight that crashed.



Home again

Back in the UK, Ken audited the manufacture of nuclear fuel at the Springfields site in Preston for Magnox/EDF.

He has always tried to support others to fulfil their potential, teaching children, including those with disabilities, to swim and becoming chairman of Old Trafford swimming club. As a volunteer for The Hive charity in Halifax, he taught adults with learning difficulties to read and write until 2019 in addition to fundraising.

When Mavis sadly developed motor neurone disease after beating kidney cancer, Ken looked after her at their home until she passed away in 2016, aged 70.

Life at Belong

After a stroke left Ken with limited mobility on one side of his body, he moved to Belong during lockdown in spring last year.

Ken will admit that repeated lockdowns left him feeling down and isolated at times. However, since restrictions on social contact and visitors have been lifted, he has revealed a sociable character, frequently attending events and activities at the village, enjoying the company of new friends and playing games such as dominoes and cards, which he is good at winning.

He remains generous with his time, sharing his passion for music by teaching one resident to play the ukulele.

His love of all things international continues as well, as he is currently learning to speak fluent Spanish, Italian and German.

Belong Residents Go for Gold

As Great Britain racked up the medals at Tokyo 2020, back home, a number of Belong teams have also been competing for podium success, with residents from across our seven care village locations enjoying a bit of friendly competition at their very own Olympics.

The Belong 2021 games comprise a mix of activities designed by the villages' dedicated activities teams and fitness instructors, specifically with older people and those living with dementia in-mind. Highlights included armchair football, ribbon yoga and paper aeroplane javelin, and residents got their creative juices flowing, making their own flags and banners of support. And in the state-of-the-art village gyms, residents travelled the world cycling, via a screen linked to specialist equipment.

Peter Norman, General Manager at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme, said: "It's been great fun hosting our own Olympics at the village. We were awash with flags and decorations made by residents to support one another – it's safe to say we've reached Olympic fever pitch!"



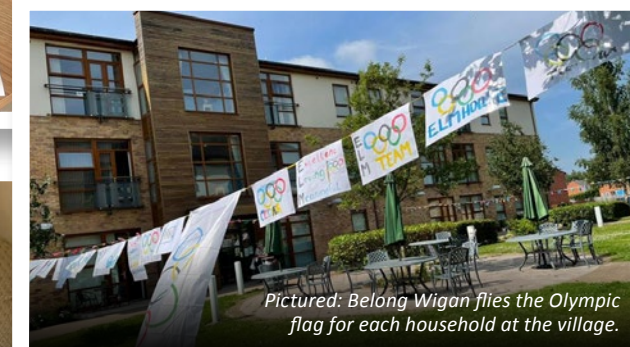
Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme residents and support workers represent Jamaica. L-R: Resident Janet, support workers Georgina and Hebileigh, and resident Vanessa.



Pictured L-R: Belong Crewe Senior Support Worker, Paige O'Neil with Resident, Shelia Manning at the village's award ceremony.



Pictured: Belong Macclesfield resident, Margaret Hughes holds the hand-made Olympic torch created during craft sessions at the village.



Pictured: Belong Wigan flies the Olympic flag for each household at the village.



Pictured: David Barnes flies one of the hand-made Olympic flags for Ena Household at Belong Atherton.



Belong Warrington Olympic games.

Jess Butler, Experience Coordinator at Belong Crewe, added: "Residents have responded very positively to the event; the light exercise, crafts activities and camaraderie has kept everyone active and engaged."

Getting into the spirit of the occasion has also reignited memories, with residents sharing anecdotes of personal sporting success in their youth and their favourite tales of Olympics from years gone by – with some even recalling London 1948, and the first international football tournament to be broadcast on British television.

Also joining in on the action, Belong colleagues took part in their own competitions, which culminated in hotly-contested tug-of-war and sack races, before later hosting closing ceremonies, featuring the awarding of medals, speeches and village parties.

Pictured (L-R): Belong Morris Feinmann Customer, Margaret, with Beth and Saffy, and (over the page) other customers who enjoyed one of the village's intergenerational events.



Go-ahead for Belong's first intergenerational nursery

Planning permission has been granted for the North West's first nursery within a care setting, at Belong's most recent care village development, which is currently under construction in Chester.

The 25-place nursery, featuring a secure sensory nature and play garden, will provide a high-quality care and learning environment for children from birth to five years, operating flexibly over six days a week to accommodate work and shift patterns. As a pioneering concept, the intergenerational nursery is designed to offer shared learning experiences and opportunities for children, families and older people, and will develop into a blueprint for intergenerational practice.

Village and nursery teams will work closely together to create a truly shared environment where children and older people can actively spend time together building meaningful relationships and connections. This will make the Chester site Belong's first truly integrated intergenerational care village.

The project has taken several years to plan and involved Belong working closely with experts from the national charity Ready Generations, which advocates and investigates the benefits of connection between generations through education,

the promotion of lifelong learning and care. The charity works in partnership with several universities, including the University of Stirling, which already has an outstandingly successful research kindergarten.

Building connections between generations is proven to have extensive benefits for both older and younger people, as Sue Egersdorff, founder of Ready Generations, explains: "Intergenerational interactions are shown to improve cognition, health and wellbeing, including supporting the learning and development of children and reducing feelings of disconnect and loneliness in older people. Young people also gain life experiences and improve their personal and social skills within new situations and environments. Both enjoy positive social interactions and the chance to develop meaningful friendships where age is of no significance. This creates a more robust vision of joyful living, one in which our dignity as humans does not depend on whether we are able to exercise certain capabilities. Everyone is

"Intergenerational interactions are shown to improve cognition, health and wellbeing, including supporting the learning and development of children and reducing feelings of disconnect and loneliness in older people."

accepted for who they are and what they bring."

The nursery represents a significant extension of Belong's commitment to the development of intergenerational communities. Welcoming and supporting young children and families into Belong care villages is already central to the organisation's ethos. This includes providing play facilities for young children and encouraging grandchildren and children of colleagues and residents to visit, as well as engaging with local schools and community organisations to coordinate a range of intergenerational activities, from reading and singing to art and science experiments.

Commenting on the development, Belong's Chief Operating Officer, Stacey McCann, said: "All our villages provide a vibrant hub within the wider community, and we are particularly excited about the unique possibilities of having an integrated intergenerational

nursery on site. With a successful track record in promoting intergenerational engagement, we already witness the benefits of this approach. By working closely with Ready Generations, we have been able to access the most advanced knowledge from research and practice to take this a step further. We expect our learning and understanding will continue to grow as the concept develops, with benefits for both residents and colleagues."

Belong Chester is due to open in February 2022 and will provide a range of care, housing and support options for older people, as well as extensive amenities in the village centre, including a bistro, hair salon, gym and art studio. As well as apartments for independent living, which will be released this month, the village will incorporate family-sized households for people requiring round-the-clock support, including specialist dementia and nursing care.



Awards recognise our inspirational colleagues

Care Colleagues' Efforts Recognised at Great British Care Awards



Pictured: Belong Crewe's Front of House team, pictured with Tracey Stakes, holding one of the awards. (L-R): Lora Burns, Ian Bossons, Hazel Evans, Tracey Stakes, Gwenda Francis, Sue Bone.

After what has been an exceptional 18 months, particularly for those working in social care, carers at Belong have had their hard work recognised at the regionals for the Great British Care Awards. And, for their work going above and beyond during the Covid-19 crisis, employer Belong also took home a regional Social Care Hero Team Award.

The special award, assessed by an independent panel of adjudicators, applauded Belong's handling of the pandemic across its seven villages and home care services in the North West and Midlands, with judges praising a team with "a culture of transparency" and innovating to promote the wellbeing of residents and colleagues during very challenging times.

Belong's win is based on prioritising the safety of customers and colleagues, whilst always working toward a Covid-free organisation, despite financial challenges that have impacted the sector. Notably, strong management, the early procurement of PPE and innovation in using technology are all key factors, as is the organisations' commitment to creative activities to keep customers'

spirits up and provide a vibrant community atmosphere for everyone.

Also picking up the Care Home Worker Award, Samuel Evans, carer at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme, had his passion described by judges as "very evident, despite not being in the sector very long. He was born to care and this came across very strongly."

Taking home the Housing with Care Award, the Front of House Team at Belong Crewe were described by judges as "outcome-focused and driven to provide the highest quality service to individuals, supporting them to remain independent in their own home and as part of the wider community."

There was also good news for one of Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme's chefs, Nathan Wilshaw, who was highly commended in the Care Home Chef/Cook Award category for his person-centred approach to his work; and for Belong Crewe Support Worker, Jodie Challinor, who was highly commended in the Care Home Worker Award category, and Sharon Bull, also highly commended in the Workforce Development Award category.

Belong Ranked in UK Top 20

We are delighted to announce that Belong has been listed as a Top 20 Mid-size Care Home Group by leading online review site carehome.co.uk, with Belong Atherton also achieving a regional distinction.

The rankings are based on verified customer reviews, with Belong achieving an average review score of 9.8 out of 10 from residents and their relatives across its seven villages in the North West for the past year.

In addition to the group award, Belong's care village in Atherton, Greater Manchester, was also ranked in the Top 20 Care Homes in the North West list, achieving a nearly perfect review score of 9.9 out of 10.

Customers leaving reviews are asked

to rate all aspects of a care home's offering, including its people, care and support, management, facilities, and overall value for money.

One recent five-star review from a relative of a resident at Belong Atherton said: "My husband has been at this care facility for the past four years. From the outset, he has always remarked that 'they cannot do enough for me'. This itself has always been a comfort to us as a family as they are my husband's own words and not just what we see as a family."

Commenting on the results, Belong's Chief Operating Officer, Stacey McCann, said: "The fact that the awards are based on reviews by people that we support and their relatives across all Belong villages is testament to consistency in achieving the highest standards of care and a reflection of the hard



work and dedication of our teams. It's particularly pleasing to see Belong Atherton listed in the top care settings in the North West."

You can read reviews of Belong on carehome.co.uk here.
<https://lnkd.in/dWwU9RG7>

To view Belong Atherton's reviews, visit its dedicated page here: <https://lnkd.in/d2gsSnvE>



LaingBuisson Awards 2021

Housing with Care

FINALIST

www.laingbuissonawards.com #LBAward

We're also thrilled to be announced as a finalist for the LaingBuisson Awards 2021!

Belong is a finalist in the Housing with Care category, recognising excellence in the provision and development of retirement villages or extra care.

Keep your eye on our website and social media pages for news of the results in November!



Chairperson 2021 Awards

Congratulations to Chair of the Board for Belong, Nicola Brooks, whose leadership through the Covid pandemic has earned her the title of Social Care Chairperson of the Year (North West England) at CEO Monthly's Chairperson Awards 2021.

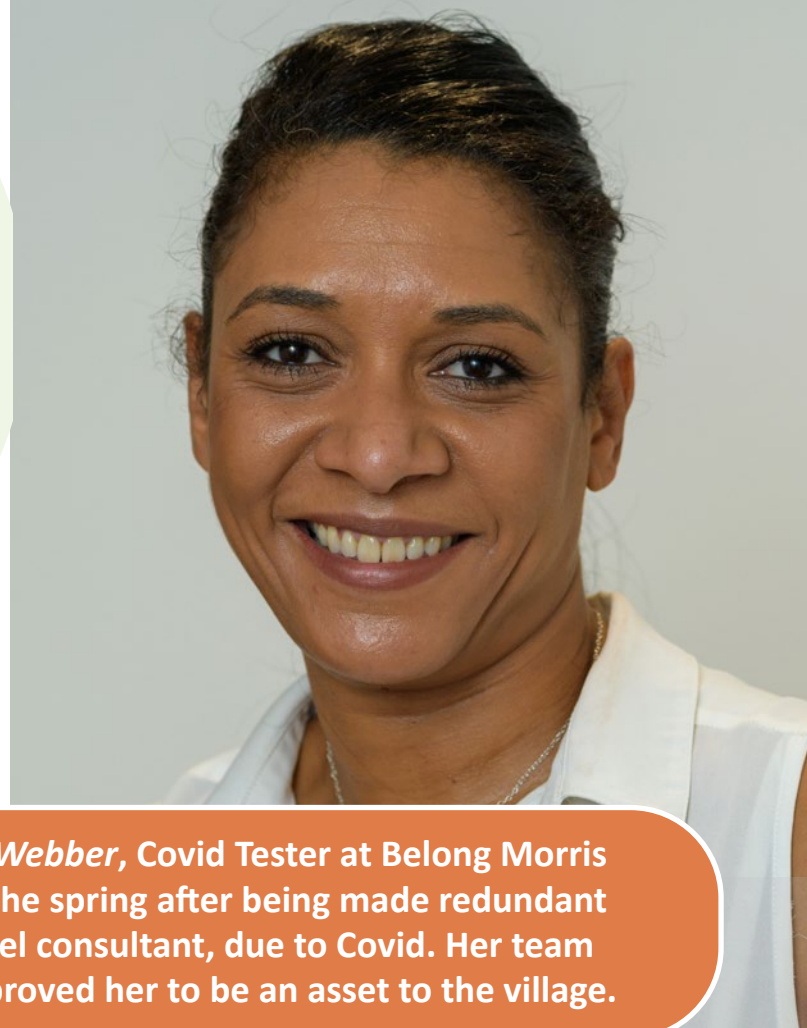
The awards honour those who possess the ability to take an organisation to the next level thanks to their commitment to promoting innovative approaches, business excellence and resolution.



Living the Values

We speak to colleagues who embody Belong's values in their day-to-day work.

In this issue, we chat with *Caroline Webber*, Covid Tester at Belong Morris Feinmann, who joined the team in the spring after being made redundant from her previous post as a VIP travel consultant, due to Covid. Her team spirit and good cheer have quickly proved her to be an asset to the village.



Can you tell us about your background?

I had experience working in care before coming to Belong. As a 20-year-old, I'd been a part-time support worker for 18 months before going to college to study Travel and Tourism. From there, I built a career in the travel industry, eventually working as a VIP travel consultant for clients, such as Manchester United Football Club.

The pandemic changed things for me – as it did for many people. It made me re-prioritise my working life. I didn't want another office job, sitting in front of a computer for nine hours a day, answering hundreds of emails and calls. I love being up and about, interacting with people and so I considered going back to a role in care. That brought me to Belong, where today I'm a support worker, currently seconded to leading Covid testing front-of-house.

What does your job involve?

I'm in charge of all the Covid testing at the village, which involves a variety of tasks to keep me busy. I greet everyone who comes through the door: visitors, people making deliveries, contractors; everyone has their temperature checked and I carry out a lateral flow test or look for clear evidence of a recent negative test, for example, if they have these stored on their mobile phone.

Every day, I make sure that we have enough testing kits. We need plenty as all visitors, including professionals,

must be tested. If there does happen to be anyone who has to self-isolate, I'll follow-up with them by carrying out a PCR test.

What would you say the most important parts are?

It's all about teamwork. It's the cog that keeps everything going at Belong. We all help out our colleagues wherever needed. That means supporting each other, not just with work duties, but doing that bit extra to make a colleague's day easier. Small things, such as helping out the residents get from A to B, free up a little time for our extremely busy support workers. That way, everything flows smoothly – exactly as it should.

And what are the most rewarding aspects of your role?

I love interacting with all the residents and tenants and learning about their life stories. I'm constantly using skills transferable from my former role, such as interpersonal skills, to build relationships with customers.

I'm fortunate that I get to touch all bases, really. I support reception – the front-of-house team are fabulous to work with and I'm always happy to lend a hand to other support workers in the households.

In the Spotlight: Josephine Mollison

For this issue of Belong Life, we spoke to **Josephine Mollison**, recently appointed **Support Manager at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme**.

Josephine's journey with Belong started in 2013 when she became a support worker at Belong Crewe. Previously she was the manager of a coffee shop but felt that she hadn't found real job satisfaction. Her move to care coincided with her undertaking a foundation degree in leadership and management.

Progression to becoming a Senior Support Worker came just a few months after Josephine embarked on her new career. She credits her quick learning and development in those early days to excellent mentorship from Belong Dementia Trainer and Coach Belinda Jones (who sadly passed away earlier this year) and Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme General Manager, Peter Norman, who was Support Manager at Belong Crewe at the time. She later became Lead Senior Support Worker on Britannia household at Belong Crewe.

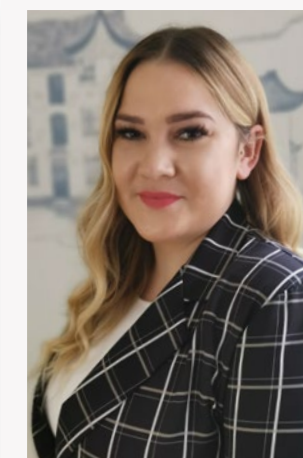
A little over a year ago, Josephine was identified as the perfect candidate to take on the temporary role of Assistant Support Manager at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme, and in June this year she successfully interviewed for the Support Manager post.

In her new role at Belong's most recently opened care village, she is responsible for ensuring the highest standards of nursing and dementia care. Josephine sees this as being about meeting emotional needs and helping people to lead a fulfilled life as much as it is about clinical support. It also involves making sure that Support Workers receive the right training to meet these requirements, as well as other administration.

On what she enjoys most about her role, Josephine says: "It's achieving the best outcomes for residents and helping them to live in the way that they want to live. What I love most about Belong is that care is about individuals rather than providing a general care environment. I also enjoy that people come to me for thoughts and advice on how to approach particular situations and overcome challenges."

Over the past eight years, Josephine has developed particular expertise in dementia care, which led to her being named Dementia Champion at last year's Belong Champion Awards.

Care very much runs in Josephine's family. Her mum is a Host at Belong Crewe, where her auntie is also Support Manager. When she's not at work, family are central to her life, and she particularly enjoys days out with her nieces and nephews.



Volunteer profile

In this feature, we recognise the outstanding contributions of volunteers to the Belong community. This issue, we give our thanks to **Belinda Hochland**, who not only has run arts, crafts and gardening sessions at Belong Morris Feinmann, but also offers customers a unique shopping experience.



Belinda started volunteering after both her parents moved into Belong and she began meeting other residents. It was when she came to realise that some of them didn't have families, or their relatives lived far away, that she appreciated what she could bring to their lives – providing companionship alongside activities they enjoyed.

Amongst the many creative amusements put together by the former art teacher, painting, colour work and making bird feeders have brought focus, fun and companionship to those involved in the sessions. And for one customer, the pleasure extended beyond the craft workshops.

Belinda explains: "I got the idea of making bird feeders from one of the

residents who is unable to join in the household activities, but loves watching nature through her bedroom window. So, I decided to hang one outside her window, and she gets so much pleasure watching the birds come to feed from it."

Belinda has always had a special interest helping the residents living with dementia. "For me, volunteering isn't just about 'doing' things with people. It's also about being able to help everyone find joy in something, recall and share memories and take pride in a task. Small things can be massive achievements for them, and I don't believe we're ever too old, too infirm or too forgetful to feel a sense of accomplishment from a challenge in life."

Belinda also enjoys running a mobile shop at the village. It began pre-Covid with another volunteer, Ruth Wilkins, with the two friends setting up the project for the residents and tenants to purchase everyday items, such as toiletries and greeting cards. After launching what was intended to be a helpful service, they quickly realised it was equally about the interaction, having a natter and another event to look forward to each week, that everyone enjoyed so much.

We can't thank Belinda enough for her time and effort invested in bringing cheer to our customers – thank you, Belinda!

Noticeboard

Belong at Home Champion

Congratulations to Kirsty Armstrong, from the Belong at Home team in Wigan, who was voted colleague of the month in August.

Colleagues voted for Kirsty due to her being "hard working, reliable and flexible" and for being "a great member of the team – a real champion."



Belong Atherton residents capture Covid snapshot

Residents have placed their seal on their very own memory box, to mark 'Freedom Day' after the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions in England and to record their experiences of the past 18 months

Featured inside the 'Moment in Time' box are testing kits, PPE, newspaper clippings and photographs, as are the personal pictures, poems and memories of residents. In a light-hearted contribution, toilet tissue has also been included to remember one of the



earliest stories to emerge from global pandemic news.

Pictured: Belong Atherton Resident, Kath Harrison (85) holds her box of memories.

Residents at Belong Morris Feinmann donate support for Afghan refugees



Pictured: Belong Morris Feinmann residents collect refugee donations

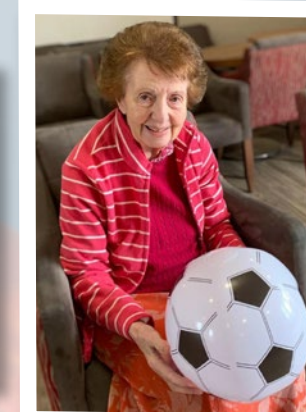
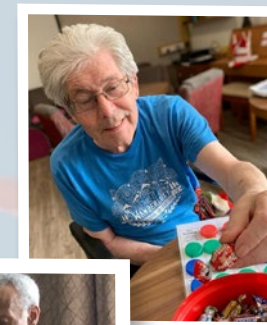
Kind-hearted residents at Belong Morris Feinmann are lending a helping hand to refugees by donating aid to those arriving in the UK.

Moved by the plight of those fleeing Afghanistan as the Taliban retook control of the war-torn country, members of the Belong Morris Feinmann community have donated 70 toiletry bags, accompanied by messages of personal support. Residents and colleagues have also extended their generosity by donating much-needed clothing and footwear to Afghans in need, in another effort being led by Bowdon Shul, South Manchester Synagogue, for which the village has an extensive relationship.

Staying active at Belong Warrington

Keeping active is an important part of maintaining health and wellbeing for our residents and apartment tenants.

Some of the recent activities we've enjoyed include garden visits, playing bingo, reading and poetry, volleyball, reminiscence sing-a-long and sensory pamper sessions to name a few!



Pictured: Belong Warrington Residents enjoying a variety of activities.

Garden party at Belong Wigan

Customers enjoyed a lovely afternoon in the garden, as the end of summer approaches.

They enjoyed entertainment, courtesy of singer Garry Alexander, and enjoyed a delicious bowl of Eton Mess with a glass of Pimms to wash it down! Everyone had a delightful day.



Customers enjoy entertainment, lovely food and great company in the village gardens.

Time capsule at Belong Newcastle

Residents of Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme have reflected on the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and created a record of their experiences for future generations by burying time capsules to mark the episode in history.

Placed inside the capsules were testing kits, PPE, magazine and newspaper clippings and photographs from throughout the period, as well as Belong literature communicating advice and guidance. Also included were letters written by residents, relatives and management and support teams sharing their personal struggles and advice for people who may face similar adversity in the future. These were sealed and buried in the residents' garden of the village, with instructions for them to be opened in 100 years' time.

Pictured: Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme general manager Peter Norman (left) with resident Paul Goodstadt (centre) and village heritage coordinator Dan Turner (right) bury the Covid-19 time capsules in the residents' garden.

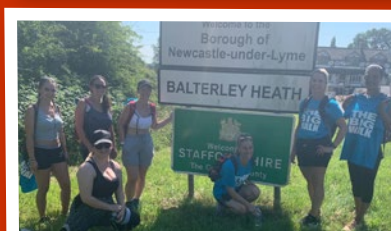


Belong Teams complete the Big Walk

Teams completed a 14 mile walk from Belong Crewe and Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme, joining together half way, before walking to each other's village.

Together they completed the walk to raise funds for village activities and with the support of everyone both teams raised over £700 each. Well done to all of the teams and thank you to everyone for their support and for the kind donations to support with continued meaningful activities for customers.

Pictured: (top left) The Belong Crewe team outside the village, (bottom left) meeting up with the Belong Newcastle team at the half-way point, and (right) one of the clay medals created by Belong Newcastle residents to celebrate the participants.



A taste of summer at Belong Macclesfield

The summer months have provided Belong Macclesfield customers with the opportunity to enjoy activities and entertainment in the village gardens.

Residents and tenants recently enjoyed a garden party with food provided by the village's bistro team (pictured right) and entertainment, courtesy of Belong Macclesfield Senior Support Worker, Helen Winchester (pictured left, behind resident Kath Barron).



Pictured L-R: The village's bistro team, Jack Bennett, Debbie Wicks and Chloe Thorlely serve up a feast at the barbecue.

We're recruiting

We have a variety of exciting opportunities to join the award-winning teams working within our state-of-the-art villages or out in the local community.



As well as working for a values-based organisation we offer some great benefits

- Salary from £19,266 - £21,801 pro rata depending on role
- Permanent/flexible contracts from 12 – 38 hours
- Paid holiday and double pay for bank holidays
- Paid training and DBS
- Full training and support provided
- Refer a friend scheme



Register your interest for a call back, or view our current vacancies and apply online:
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