

BelongLife

SUMMER 2022

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Word from the team

This issue marks the first since the arrival of our new Belong Chief Executive, Martin Rix, who reflects on the first months of his tenure.

Hello!

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Belong community for your warm welcome whilst meeting many of you over the past few months. I have consistently been blown away by the compassion shown by my colleagues in their interactions with our customers and their families. The dedication and warmth I have witnessed is truly inspirational and has left me immensely proud to be a part of this fantastic organisation.

What is also evident to me is the success of the care model that we operate and the overwhelming sense of pride of those who work and live in the villages. The quality of care from colleagues in our Belong at Home service is also exceptional and I'm pleased to congratulate the teams for earning a place in Homecare.co.uk's top 20 home care services in the country for the fifth year running.

There's much to celebrate as life begins to revert back to a level of normality across the organisation and we welcome the community into our villages. Platinum Jubilee celebrations proved to be extra special, as Belong was selected to appear in the official pageant commemorative album and one of our co-founders, Tracy Paine, has been awarded an MBE for services to dementia care.

We're also delighted to have taken handover of Belong Chester, which opens this July, marking a new era for us as our first intergenerational village, with an integrated children's nursery (see opposite).

Elsewhere, building works are underway at Belong Birkdale for a 2023 completion, and in this issue, you can read the latest update for Belong Wirral.

Finally, I know from talking with everybody that I have met so far, that we share a vision of continued excellence and further development of the Belong model and service. I want you to know that I see the vision for Belong as being owned by all of us and that we all have an important part to play in our future.

So, I look forward to meeting more of our community and working closely with everyone to bring to life your ideas as we take Belong forward, together.

All my respect and best wishes
Martin Rix, Belong Chief Executive

Belong Chester is unveiled!

July sees the long-awaited opening of Belong Chester, bringing together world class dementia facilities with a high quality children's day nursery, pioneering opportunities to connect people across the generations.

Belong Chester offers a mix of independent living apartments and households where 24-hour support, including dementia and nursing care, is provided. All residents enjoy access to a vibrant village centre with a range of facilities including a bistro, specialist gym, hair salon, therapy room and entertainment venue with licensed bar.

In a first for Belong, the Chester village centre is home to a high quality children's day nursery, creating additional opportunities for intergenerational experiences – something which is already an important feature of life in Belong villages.

Belong Chief Executive, Martin Rix, said: "The beauty of the village model is that we are able to offer a range of spaces and experiences, and give people the choice to join in as much or as little of village life as they choose."

"The important thing is that the opportunities are there for those who want to take advantage of them and that we are able to extend access to people from the wider community to take part in village life. This is crucial in ensuring residents continue to feel connected and integrated within society, and we are particularly excited that Belong Chester will have this very special and new element for us, which is the integration of a children's nursery."

The 25-place Nursery in Belong provides a high-quality care and learning environment for children from birth to five years, six days a week. It is operated by national charity, Ready Generations, and village and nursery teams will work closely together to create a truly shared environment where children and older people can learn together and build an active, intentional and collaborative community that includes every generation.

Preview day events, including tours, presentation and refreshments, will take place on:

Tuesday 5 July 10am and 2pm
Friday 8 July 10am and 2pm

You can also pop along to one of our drop-in days on:

Saturday 16 July 10am – 4pm
Wednesday 20 July 10am – 4pm
Monday 25 July 10am – 4pm
Saturday 30 July 10am – 4pm

Preview Days



Belong begins initial works at Wirral Waters site

Belong has begun enabling works at its site at Peel L&P's Wirral Waters, appointing Caddick Construction to carry out the work as the organisation commences development of its £20 million leading-edge care village.

Belong Wirral will be the hub of a dementia-friendly neighbourhood within one of the largest and most sustainable regeneration projects in the UK, on the 'Left Bank' of the River Mersey.

The village will offer a vibrant setting, with a number of amenities including a waterside bistro, hair salon, exercise studio, and entertainment venue with licensed bar. Outdoor spaces include spacious balconies for each household and a rooftop garden.

Belong chief executive, Martin Rix, said: "We are delighted to be entering the next stage of this landmark project, which also marks the latest expansion of Belong in the

North West. Wirral Waters is an exciting development and we're looking forward to welcoming the community to what will be our second Merseyside village, following the opening of Belong Birkdale, next year."

Richard Mawdsley, director of development for Wirral Waters at Peel L&P, the owners and developers of the Wirral Waters regeneration project, added: "It's wonderful to see even more progress along Northbank with the creation of Belong Wirral, which will offer specialist dementia care and accommodation, as well as a range of facilities and employment opportunities which will all significantly benefit the local community. Belong's development will be a key component of the diverse neighbourhood we are creating along Northbank."

Following the completion of the enabling works, the main contractor is due to commence onsite later this year, with completion of the build expected in 2024.

A Customer's View

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

In this issue of *Belong Life*, we enjoyed a chat with **Olive Rodgers (89)**, an apartment tenant and Experience Day customer at Belong Wigan who enjoys the variety of clubs at the village, as well as a hobby that has made her a popular person at the local hospital.

Non-stop knitter, Olive Rodgers, has been clothing premature babies for more years than she cares to remember now, thanks to her skills with a couple of needles and a ball of wool.

What began as an offer of help when a member of her own family was born premature, has continued with knitting tiny baby clothing for the neonatal unit at Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust ever since.

"My great-grandson was only 1lb at birth, and his mum and dad had such a struggle trying to find clothes small enough to keep him warm. So, it made sense for me to get my knitting needles out – I'd used them to clothe my own children when they were small, after all.

"Now, my granddaughter-in-law works at Wigan hospital, and she tells me how much my knitting is needed. I really love to help."

Olive's efforts certainly don't go unnoticed. She recently received a letter from the hospital expressing how delighted they were with her donations. The parents, they added, also really appreciate her kindness for their little ones in what can be a stressful time for them.

Delightful donations

Since moving into an apartment at Belong Wigan nine years ago, it's perhaps not surprising that Olive has been knitting for our colleagues and their grandchildren too. She explains where her needle skills came from: "I've been knitting since I was 18-years-old and had to use it to dress

my own children. My grandmother had actually taught me to knit when I was a youngster, but I'd forgotten all about it until the need came. Today I have orders coming out of my ears, but I'm definitely not complaining."

Knit and natter

Olive meets regularly with the village's Knit and Natter group and looks forward to catching up with her companions, Brenda and Anne from Willow House. As they get started with their needlework, or 'casting on' as it's called, the three like to share old memories and go over the activity from the gin tasting club, hosted by the Bistro, which also involves cheese, crackers and a good singalong.

The best years

Olive particularly loves The Bistro as it gives her the chance to do lots of people watching in what she describes as a 'vibrant and welcoming' place. She says: "The food at The Bistro is second to none, and really the whole Belong team is magnificent. Karen from Belong at Home and Charlene, the experience coordinator, in particular, are superb, but everyone – from management to housekeeping and reception – is brilliant. Being at Belong has been the best nine years I've had. And I hope I'm here for another ten at least."



Memory Lane...

This latest issue of *Memory Lane* features the life of Gillian Wakeley, Coronation House resident at Belong Crewe. As told by her son, Jim, he shares with us how his mother's love of music has shaped her life and the lives of everyone around her.

My mother was born in Crewe in 1940 to Ethel (a confectioner) and Walter Lomas (an accountant). The middle child of three siblings, she had a happy childhood, spending much time playing outdoors with older brother, Keith, and younger sister, Jean, in the shadow of Crewe Railway Works and the Rolls Royce Factory.

Gill's love was music, rather than academia, and upon finishing school, she went to Austria to study it. She also worked as an auxiliary nurse for a spell, but music was in her blood and is what brought her and my father, Anthony, together. Gill was an accompanist and conductor for the Crewe Male Voice Choir, and my father was a singer. They married in July 1971 and went on to have two sons – Richard in 1978 and myself in 1980. Today, Mum also has three granddaughters.

Adventures in music

Before getting married, Gill studied music at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, where she became an accomplished pianist and vocalist. She went on to impart her expertise, working as a teacher at the former Boys Grammar School in Crewe and then as a lecturer at Madeley College, near Stoke.

Later, she worked from home and provided private piano, voice, and violin tuition. At the same time, she ran a music



Gillian in her younger days; Gillian and Richard at the piano; Jim, Gillian and Richard in the 1980s; Gillian pictured recently, enjoying dominoes with Lindsay Cope-Williams, Lead Support Worker



group for children, 'Quavers', and it was this teaching that was used extensively in the book *'Adventures in Music for the Very Young'* (1984), which is still available to buy online. Derek Griffiths and Carol Leader from the long-running BBC programme, Play School, were also involved and the book won the 1985 Royal Society of Arts' Radcliffe Award for Graphic Excellence in Music Publishing.

Gill ended up teaching music at Monks Coppenhall Primary School in Maw Green until she retired at the turn of the millennium. Even today, a lot of people still recognise mum when we're out and about – many of whom were inspired to take up music themselves. Mum was passionate about the benefits and enjoyment of learning a musical instrument in particular. As we grew up, Richard's instruments were the cello and guitar, while I studied the violin, then later, percussion and drums.

Love of music

After retirement, Gill continued to enjoy music. She performed in the Hallé Choir in Manchester (which she'd regularly enjoyed watching as a student), as well as other ensembles in the city. Never one to sit still, she also took up Scottish dancing and yoga, and for the latter she sometimes leads sessions on the household.

Mum is happy at Belong and, despite her poor memory and the challenges of dementia, you can take her to the piano on her household and she's in her element – her ability to play music remains exceptional.



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

LISTENING TO THE EXPERTS...

Customer Satisfaction Results

As always, Belong is grateful to all our customers and relatives who took part in the Customer Satisfaction Survey. Your thoughts and suggestions are vitally important to inform how we shape the environment, services and experience for everyone and we take this process very seriously and work hard to acknowledge and address the findings.

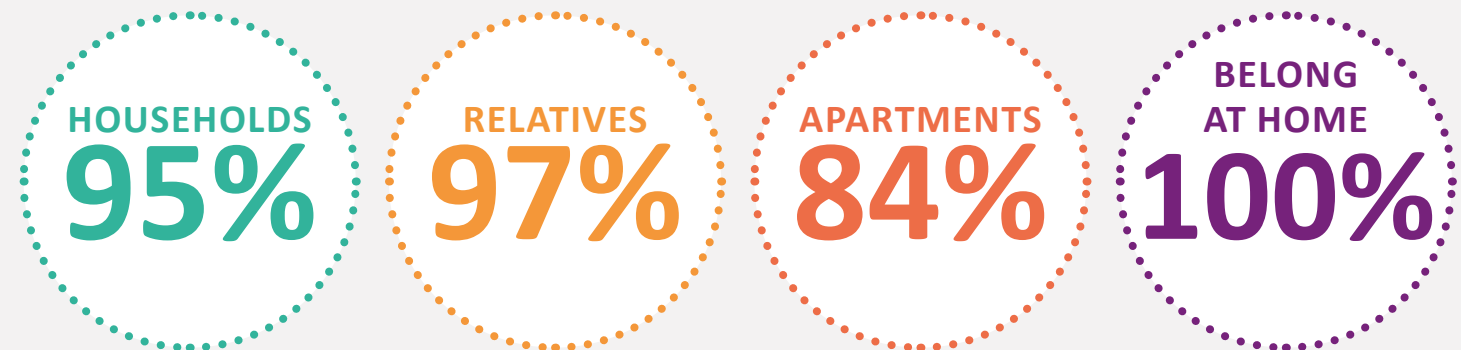
This year's survey, carried out between January and March 2022, generated a record 574 responses and reflected another year living with Covid, which notably included the lifting of a lockdown (May 2021) and the relaxing of some of the Government's guideline restrictions.

Positively, 94% said the Belong team supports customers in a compassionate, caring and respectful way, and 95% agreed they felt supported to stay safe in the current environment. We have also been overwhelmed by many wonderful comments for our colleagues and delight in being able to share such encouraging feedback with them.

What is also clear is that there is an opportunity to make some improvements and here we've detailed the key areas we are already focusing on to make Belong the best place to live.

Of course, the survey is just one way we collect the thoughts of our customers, in addition to online reviews, village feedback and customer review meetings. As a listening organisation, we are always happy to talk through your experiences, however positive or constructive, so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

THE PERCENTAGE OF CUSTOMERS THAT WOULD RECOMMEND BELONG ACROSS ALL VILLAGES AND SERVICES



Published results are available in all villages; please contact reception for your personal copy.

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2022

Response rates and feedback vary by location, and individual reports are produced and shared at each village. However, there are some global themes to emerge, which we will be addressing as follows:

- Navigating the pandemic: Covid restrictions continued to feature in feedback, particularly for visiting and reopening of the village centres. Customers feel safe and approve of our approach using PPE and it is our hope that sentiment will already have improved following the changes made with regard to relaxing visiting rules and enabling household visits once more.

Following a consultation with customers and relatives, The Bistro has reopened to all, including the general public, and we were delighted to be able to welcome people back in time for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. Covid risk assessments have been carried out at all locations and we will continue to take sensible precautions to keep people as safe as possible as the villages gradually return to the vibrant places we have always known.

- Increasing staff levels: results of the survey have largely been positive in this area and some feedback has been provided regarding staffing numbers and consistency – an ongoing issue affecting the whole care sector. In response, Belong launched an enhanced, sector-leading remuneration package for all colleagues at the start of the year, which we will continue to review. We will also carry on prioritising recruitment through proactive campaigns.
- Ensuring access to meaningful occupation: the number of customers enjoying activities, exercise and the outdoors has reduced, particularly for apartment tenants. We recognise some of this was related to Covid lockdowns or personal choice; however, we are providing more support to Experience Coordinators to maximise opportunities through the activities and events programme.

The *What's On* newsletter, paused during the pandemic, will soon be relaunched to communicate activities to everyone, and improvements are being made to freshen up village gardens to facilitate greater use. The villages' Exercise Specialists are also reviewing fitness provision to provide more variety.

- Reviewing The Bistro provision: whilst most Belong customers are happy with the food provided, comments made have identified some differences between villages and the need for more variety. The creation of the 'lead host' role has already made a noticeable difference to food quality and we continue to work with the teams to drive standards and choice.
- Keeping up communication: we received positive feedback for communication, particularly the use of Relatives Gateway as an effective tool, though an improvement opportunity has been identified in relation to its use in Belong at Home, as well as household leads keeping relatives up-to-date. As such, more training has been planned for our colleagues to get the most out of the system.
- Maintaining state-of-the-art village standards: customers and relatives are generally very happy with the high quality village environments, though the speed of some repairs could be quicker, particularly for apartment tenants. Belong is reviewing its systems, process and resourcing in this area to keep villages fully functional and looking their best at all times.
- Shaping the Belong at Home service: 100% of Belong at Home customers and relatives would recommend the service. Additional services requested included more opportunities outside of the home and a sleep-in service. There were a couple of instances of feedback regarding consistency of support workers, which is an operating principle Belong takes very seriously. Naturally, it has been more challenging with the impact of Covid, however, we have continued to avoid the use of agency within Belong at Home and we are increasing our capacity to help ensure consistency.

The following are a selection of what our customers like most about Belong villages:

Household Customers

"The staff here tend to go the extra mile for all the customers, making sure they find time for all of us."

"Staff ensure that I go to my gym appointments and attend activities on a regular basis."

Relatives

"Excellent communication when needed. Relatives gateway is well written, informative and provides a great deal of comfort – the teams really do work hard. The environment does not feel like a care home, more a family hotel."

Apartment Customers

"Belong is a lovely place, always nice and clean, I always feel very safe within the village."

"The kitchen staff prepare lovely meals and go out of their way to help, giving their time in what has been a very challenging period [during the pandemic]."

Belong at Home Customers

"I'm very pleased with the standard of service provided for me."

"Our carer is a superb carer and not only does she help with all aspects of care and household duties but she helps with our emails, internet shopping, medical appointments and anything else we ask her to do."



BUBBLES AND BUNTING:

Belong celebrates Jubilee with biggest party ever

Joyous celebrations at Belong villages took place over the Jubilee weekend, with customers and families marking Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a party of a lifetime.

Amongst an abundance of Union Jack flags, tea and cake, the residents and tenants across the North West and Midlands dressed in their best for a jam-packed bank holiday weekend, featuring right royal garden parties, complete with music from bygone eras, and live entertainment.

Highlights included customers being supported to create Jubilee cocktails and commemorative plates; playing giant lawn games and pin the crown on the queen; visits from the zoo, silhouette artists, singers, dancers and musicians; and even knitting corgis and crowns to decorate local Royal Mail post boxes.

Stacey McCann, chief operating officer at Belong, said: "Our customers have loved being involved with the plans, inputting their ideas and sharing their experiences from past jubilees and reminiscing about the Coronation.

"It's been a fantastic celebration and to see the happiness in everyone's faces and the tremendous impact it has had has been wonderful and I'm sure it will be the talk of our villages for some time to come."

Belong's celebrations coincide with being chosen to feature in the official publication of Her Majesty The Queen: The Official Platinum Jubilee Pageant Album. Launched on the 5th June, the book commends outstanding individuals and organisations from across the country and the Commonwealth that have had an impact on life in the UK over the past seven decades.



ATHERTON



Peter

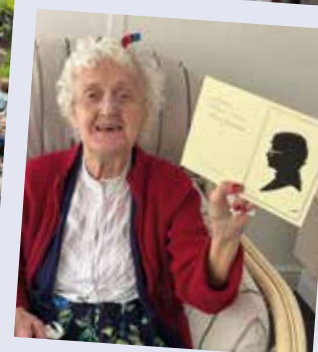


Lily

MACCLESFIELD



Nancy



Christine

CREWE



Audrey, Margaret, Doreen, Mary and Betty



Ian, David, Jerry and Jean

WIGAN



Janet, John (and Peter)



Margaret



John



David and Kath

MORRIS FEINMANN



Len and Bridget

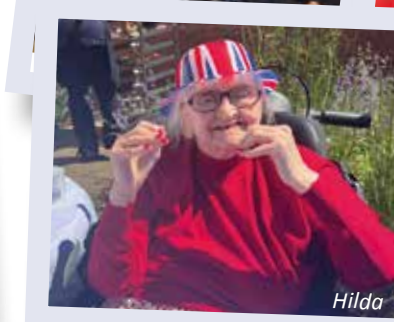
NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME



William



Roy



Hilda

WARRINGTON



June, Fred and Jade



Joan and family





Intergenerational champion uses new role to bring community together

A newly appointed ambassador for promoting relationships between all ages as part of everyday life has enlisted children and older people to bring to life a historic story.

Taking up her role as intergenerational practice lead for Belong, Sophie McKeon has spearheaded 'Ribbons of Love', a project devised by national charity, Ready Generations. The aim is to foster connections and learning between people of all ages – an approach advocated by both organisations – in this instance, through the use of history and art.

Whilst enduring hardship in the 18th century, thousands of mothers left their newborn infants in the care of London's Foundling Hospital, providing only a bespoke ribbon as a way of identifying their offspring upon their return when they could afford to care for them.



Pictured (left), Resident, Ann Black and (right) Cole & Ruby receive their ribbons.

Today, a modern take has been used to mark Global Intergenerational Week (25.04.22 - 01.05.22), with pupils of nurseries and schools in Chester and Crewe, and Belong's residents all exchanging decorated ribbons, pictures and messages of love.

Sophie McKeon commented: "Ribbons of Love has been really well-received by our residents, who have loved getting creative, and imparting their wisdom and well-wishes to the children. The feedback from the participating schools has also been positive, with one teacher commenting on how much the pupils enjoyed it and it has given them ideas for future collaboration. The whole experience has been just magical."

Ann Black, 79, resident at Belong, said: "I wrote, 'Be brave and go on an adventure,' for my message to a child. It's been a lovely activity and keeping in touch with the children between our visits has been wonderful."

Sophie will be based at Belong's new state-of-the-art care village on City Road in Chester, when it opens this summer. You can find out more about Sophie and her new role in our 'In the Spotlight' feature on page 13.

Martin Rix, Belong chief executive, added: "We're really pleased to welcome Sophie to the team for this newly created role and are hugely excited about the opportunities to drive intergenerational best practice forward, particularly as we prepare to open our first nursery in Belong. Belong is committed to breaking down longstanding intergenerational barriers that exist in the UK, as we passionately believe that doing so can bring significant benefits, not just for older people, but for people of all ages."

Gisela and Sonja visit the Palace for Platinum Jubilee celebrations

Two Jewish sisters from Belong Morris Feinmann have commemorated their British Empire Medals (BEMs) alongside members of the royal family at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party, hosted on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen.

Gisela Feldman, 98, and Sonja Sternberg, 96, travelled to the capital from their home at Belong Morris Feinmann to enjoy an afternoon of tea and cake and the opportunity to explore the palace gardens. Joining them and the other guests invited in recognition of their achievements and service to the country were Prince Edward, Sophie, Countess of Wessex, Kate Middleton, and Princess Alexandra, the Queen's first cousin.

The siblings have dedicated their lives to Holocaust education, sharing their personal experiences, the plight of modern refugees, and keeping alive the memory of those lost so that future generations all over the world continue learning about WWII. Gisela summarises: "We are the last generation

of eyewitnesses – people cannot deny what we experienced. It is said that bad things only happen if good people do nothing, and this is what drives us to educate others to do better."

The pair were appointed in the 2020 New Year honours and awarded their medals by Sir Warren Smith, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, who represents the Queen in the area. After a two-year wait owing to the pandemic, they have now been able to mark the occasion at the palace for one of the Queen's annual parties.

Speaking of the Garden Party experience, Sonja Sternberg said: Sonja Sternberg added: "I saw Kate Middleton and would have liked to tell her I'm the same age as the Queen.



Photo above: Gisela and Sonja visit the Palace

It was the most thrilling, once-in-a-lifetime experience."

We were also delighted to celebrate the news that Tracy Paine, one of Belong's founders, was awarded an MBE for services to dementia care in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2022. We couldn't imagine a more fitting tribute to all that has been achieved in shaping the Belong village model.



Photo: Tracy Paine, Belong Co-founder

BELONG AT HOME

Double Success for Belong at Home



Pictured: Belong at Home Area Managers (top) Tomas Zahorka, Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme and (bottom) Andrew Shield, Belong Warrington.

Belong at Home, which provides high quality home care for people living independently at Belong villages and wider communities, is celebrating being ranked in the Top 20 Home Care Groups in the UK for a fifth consecutive year by leading online reviews site Homecare.co.uk, with its Newcastle-under-Lyme and Warrington locations also achieving regional Top 20 Listings.



The ranking is based on verified customer reviews, with Belong at Home achieving an average review score of 9.8 out of 10 for the past year, placing it amongst the highest rated services in the country.

The Homecare.co.uk Top 20 Home Care Provider Awards 2022 recognise the most recommended domiciliary care providers throughout the UK. A position in the Top 20 Home Care Group category demonstrates that Belong at Home has achieved high ratings for all aspects of its service, including its people, care and support, management, treating customers with dignity, and overall value for money.

In addition to the group award, the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Warrington

branches of Belong at Home, which have review scores of 9.9 and 10 out of 10 respectively, were also listed in the Top 20 Home Care Providers in the West Midlands and North West.

Commenting on the wins Belong Chief Operating Officer Stacey McCann said: "We're really proud of our continued success at the Homecare.co.uk Awards. As the results are based on the reviews of our customers, their positive feedback and recognition makes the award win especially pleasing. The Belong at Home team work tirelessly to ensure the highest standards of care for our customers, and they are delighted that their dedication is recognised by the people they support."

Living the Values

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



Pictured (above): Kelly with Experience Day customer, Graham.

Kelly Dickinson joined Belong in 2014, working on the Experience Day team. Today, the Senior Support Worker on Tyldesley House at Belong Atherton tells us about her career in care.

Can you tell us about your Belong journey, so far?

My first job at Belong involved taking care of our customers by providing enjoyable activities for them, both in and out of the village – anything that they wanted to do based on their interests. It was such a fun role! I'd been working as an assistant manager at a post office for 15 years when I decided I wanted a change. After completing training as a teaching assistant, I found I could only work part-time and so I decided to look into care and adapt my knowledge and training to work with older people, instead.

I felt really inspired by colleagues and I wanted to develop my skills and knowledge, so I trained to become a support worker. Within two years, I'd progressed to a senior position, and I still get to be creative in my role, so it's the best of both worlds.

What sort of things do you get up to each day?

I believe it's important to provide a bright and pleasant environment for everyone and incorporate aspects of what each of our residents would have had in their own homes when they were growing up, as this really contributes to their wellbeing.



We also decorate the households for different activities and occasions. For Chinese New Year, I helped customers to make handmade lanterns and for one lady, I made red voiles (thin curtains) to really make her feel at home. Recently, I've transformed the household's balcony to a colourful setting for everyone to enjoy this summer.

Are there any challenges?

End of life care is particularly challenging; naturally, it can be difficult due to the relationships and bonds we build with customers and their families. In some ways, you all become one big family, so it's hard to say goodbye.

What's the best thing about your job?

We have a great team here – everyone is so supportive and we're given the opportunity to input ideas, for example, fun things we can all share in. Each shift is finished with a smile and cuddle; we are truly a family and I feel honoured to be part of the team.

In the Spotlight: Sophie McKeon

For this issue of Belong Life, we meet Sophie McKeon, Intergenerational Practice Lead for Belong, who is tasked with heading up strategy to promote relationships between all ages, across the organisation and the communities we serve.

Many of our customers will have already met Sophie as she has been making her way around the villages to meet everyone and begin her work by building on our teams' established relationships with local nurseries, schools and businesses.

Sophie will be based at Belong Chester, when it opens this summer, our first village to include a fully integrated children's nursery. She is already working closely with the nursery's operator, national charity, Ready Generations, to make the most of the shared learning opportunities for children and older people alike.

Marking Global Intergenerational Week 2022, one of Sophie's first tasks involved supporting the experience teams with the 'Ribbons of Love' initiative (see page 10).

A graduate in early years education, the Liverpool John Moores University alumni's aim is to create an intergenerational community across all ages and communities to provide positive outcomes for everyone, including improved mental health and wellbeing, healthy places to live and reduced loneliness.



Pictured: Sophie McKeon

Welcome to the Belong community, Sophie!

Crewe Mayor opens town's LGBT+ Silver Pride

This summer, Belong Crewe's reopening saw Councillor Nan Walton, Mayor of Crewe, cutting the rainbow ribbon for the town's fourth annual Silver Pride, the celebration of LGBT+ life and culture, especially for the over 55s.

As host, the village welcomed the community for a colourful afternoon of live entertainment, activities and dining. Celebrations also coincide with the reopening of the onsite Bistro to members of the public for the first time since the pandemic began over two years ago.

The day's highlights included a fashion parade (with prizes for the best dressed), music and dancing, face painting and LGBT+ inspired art and poetry created by Belong Crewe's residents and apartment tenants. Attendees had the chance to mingle with the Crewe teams from Cheshire Constabulary, and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service, who joined in the group dance to the famous tune of the Village People's 'Y.M.C.A.'

The aim of the yearly event is to bring local people and organisations together and provide a safe space for everyone to feel confident being themselves, no matter their age, or who they love.



Pictured L-R: Belong Crewe apartment tenants, Margaret Jackson and Betty Pratt with Experience Days colleagues Mandy and Emma.

Silver Pride has been made possible thanks to Cheshire East Council's 'Connected Communities' strategy, and supported by sexual health charity, Body Positive North Wales & Cheshire, Silver Rainbows LGBT+ social network, as well as donations of crafts materials from stationery retailer, Rymans.

Jess Butler, experience coordinator at Belong Crewe, said: "We love Silver Pride; it brings out the best in everyone and we're thrilled to host the party, once again. Our customers always get excited for the occasion and we had so much fun sharing with them and the community in the weekend's festivities."



Pictured: Nan Walton, Mayor of Crewe (centre) cuts the rainbow ribbon at Belong Crewe's Silver Pride event, along with Crewe community services and members of the Belong Crewe team.

Noticeboard

For further details on these stories and more, from across our villages, follow us on Facebook or Twitter, or visit our news page on our website at www.belong.org.uk/news

Wigan Warriors Visit

Belong at Home, Atherton Customer, Peter Adshead, enjoyed a trip to a Wigan Warriors' rugby match with Community Support Worker Paula Patterson recently.

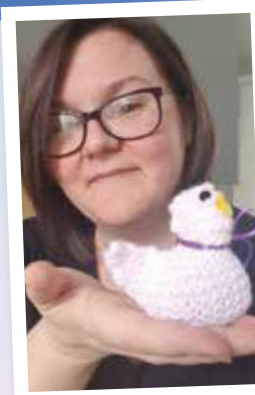
Peter watched the game and took the opportunity for a few photo opportunities with the players whilst he was there – I think you can tell from his smile that he had a great time!



Jemma knits for dementia-friendly farm

Over the Easter break, Jemma Sharratt, Lead Nurse at **Belong Atherton**, was busy knitting little ducklings with sweet surprises inside them to support Hope View Sensory Farm, near Leigh.

Having volunteered there in the past, the farm is very special to Jemma and the £263 raised from colleagues and customers' families will support the community-run farm designed for those living with Alzheimer's and dementia. A true Belong champion; well done, Jemma!



Brave carers jump for Queen's Jubilee

A group of **Belong Macclesfield** carers have taken to the skies for a daredevil jump in the name of a Jubilee party for the residents of the village and their families.

Thanks to the £1,161.81 raised from sponsorship donations, Belong Macclesfield residents welcomed their family and friends for Jubilee celebrations in the village's dementia friendly garden. Entertainment included singers, a silhouette artist and plenty of bunting, tea and cake.

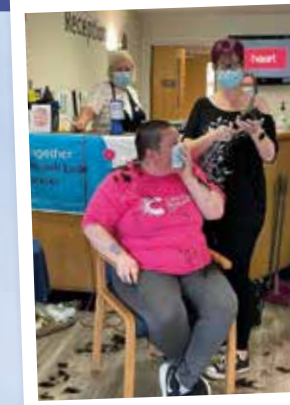


Pictured L-R: One of the skydive instructors with members of the Belong Macclesfield team; Chris Jones, Helen Marsden and Liv Falero.

BRAVE the shave

Lyndsey Soho, a support worker at **Belong Wigan**, shaved all her hair off to raise funds for Cancer Research UK recently.

To date she has raised a very impressive £709, with more donations still coming in. If you would like to donate please speak to someone at the village or follow this link - <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/lyndsey-sohe3>



Royal display

Belong Morris Feinmann residents have enjoyed creating a royal display of hand-made plates.

Pride of place in the village, they are on display to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee event. I think you'll agree, they look absolutely wonderful!



Belong welcomes Ed Balls and BBC's The One Show

Belong Crewe has opened its doors to BBC's The One Show and former Shadow Chancellor, Ed Balls, who visited the village to explore the benefits of the village's specialist exercise studio.

As the government recently announced a 10-year plan and funding to research dementia and neurodegenerative conditions, Ed met with Belong Crewe residents, Richard and Harold, along with specialist instructor, Max, to discuss their cycling programme. The Motiview technology enables the pair to virtually explore breath-taking landscapes of their choice via a screen linked to their exercise bikes. Participants can choose destinations from their childhood, holidays, or anywhere they desire, to keep them motivated whilst cycling.

Sadly, since filming, Richard has passed away and Belong's thoughts are with his family. We are also thankful to them for giving us permission for the story to be shared and we hope it brings them some comfort.



Pictured: Richard (Front), with his daughter Lisa (R), and Ed Balls (L).

Team Sodexo returns to Macclesfield

Celebrating World Earth Day back in April, **Belong Macclesfield** were once again joined by hospitality company, Sodexo, who spent the day getting the village's gardens summer-ready.

The volunteers weeded, bedded new plants and brought the garden back to its vibrant self – thank you so much, we really appreciate all your hard work!

Pictured: Members of the Sodexo team in the garden at Belong Macclesfield.



Farewell to Dan

Colleagues at **Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme** recently bid farewell to the village's Heritage Coordinator, Daniel Turner.

Dan was a part of the opening team at the village and will be missed by colleagues, residents and apartment tenants alike. Thank's Dan for all of your hard work over the years and for helping the village to achieve something special within the community.



Dan pictured with Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme colleagues.



Customers and local community members enjoy a get-together in the Philip Astley themed Reminiscence Lounge.

In other news...

Belong customers were delighted to be joined by our friends from the local community after such a long time. The reminiscence session, which was very well attended, had such a positive impact on the well-being of all participants and we're delighted to be able to welcome people into our vibrant village once again.

Welcome back...

The Bistros: now open



We are delighted to announce that The Bistros have now reopened to external visitors after remaining closed since the outset of the coronavirus pandemic.

Located at the heart of the village's central hub and open to the public, as well as friends and relatives of residents, the family-friendly cafés are focal points for local communities and serve a wide range of freshly prepared food and snacks throughout the day in a relaxed and informal setting.

Purchase a coffee and cake during your visit and get another absolutely FREE!

Hand this voucher to one of the bistro team and enjoy.

Terms and conditions: Valid at The Bistro. One voucher per customer. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Belong reserves the right to amend or withdraw this offer at any time.



Belong 

Your life, your pace, your way.

VILLAGE LOCATIONS: Atherton | Chester | Crewe | Didsbury | Macclesfield | Newcastle-under-Lyme | Warrington | Wigan*

*Belong Wigan remains closed to the public due to refurbishments but is planned to re-open soon.