

Appendix 1 – Testimonials and Case studies

Testimonials

1) Partner Statement – Citizens' Advice

Ceri Morgan, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent CAB:

“Citizens Advice Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent's Warmer Wales 2 energy advice project has provided essential energy advice during the cost of living crisis. Working in partnership with Caerphilly Cares and Housing, we have developed the project to offer fuel vouchers to vulnerable individuals experiencing severe hardship and unable to heat their homes. Working together we have jointly promoted the benefits of the project, increased the number of people accessing advice and provided key support to communities across Caerphilly Borough. Working with Caerphilly Cares and Housing has not only allowed us to meet the needs of more people but has helped us to deliver a successful energy product more effectively than we could have done working alone.”

2) Partner statement – The Parish Trust

Rev. Dean Aaron Roberts:

“The Parish Trust has been privileged to work alongside Caerphilly Cares in our collective mission to support the people of Caerphilly. The team have played an instrumental role in enabling us to network, collaborate, source funding, and bring together innovative ideas to benefit our local community. Through our collaboration with Caerphilly Cares, we have witnessed tangible benefits that have had a profound impact on our organisation's ability to serve our community effectively. The assistance and guidance provided by Caerphilly Cares have not only enhanced our outreach but have also helped us to streamline our efforts, ultimately maximising our impact. In working with Caerphilly Cares, we have experienced a genuine commitment to empowering local charities and community organisations. The guidance and resources offered have been invaluable, making it easier for us to navigate the challenging landscape of community support. The connections forged through Caerphilly Cares have opened doors to potential funding opportunities, resource sharing, and a wealth of collaborative initiatives that benefit the people of Caerphilly.”

3) Rhiannon Jones

Business Manager, Maximus

“We have had a customer in today where his life has literally been turned around by the collaborate support that we (collectively) have put in place.

The customer was referred to us by JCP as part of the Work and Health Programme Contract.

The customer was suffering with severe mental health which was due to recent loss of his wife and spiralling financial situation.



The impact upon his health was clear to see, wasn't sleeping, eating and trying to bury his head in the sand as escapism.

The customer was distressed and could see no way out from his issues, mainly being the debt for his council tax and rent within CCBC.

Following on from this, the customer has tried numerous times to try and engage with the local authority and various departments however he wasn't getting anywhere and felt he was being given the run around, facing penalties which was obviously adding to his already concerning Mental Health.

Customer attended his appointment with Kelly, where she was able to support him by being signposted for a referral, via the Caerphilly Cares contact number, where he was then referred to the support he needed from the offset, assigned a key worker and a fully manageable plan was quickly put in place.

The customer's life was quickly turned around within a short space of time where he seriously cannot thank everyone enough!! He is so grateful!

I feel I needed to share this as a way of communication how well the Single point of contact has supported us to ensure this customers wellbeing has been supported. Despite given the 'run around 'and him trying to get things together himself, this single point gateway has literally been a lifesaver. The ease of the access to service has provided a huge level of support for both the customer and ourself in his own progression. The customer is now looking at a more positive future, in working towards obtaining his Bus licence and a FT job.

Without this service we wouldn't have been able to ensure not only his wellbeing, his confidence and his progression! The Caerphilly Cares service has supported our customer in such a short space of time, which has certainly helping preventing his further decline in his Mental Health!

Thanks again from all the team in the Work and Health Programme Contract in Caerphilly!!!"

4) Dai Morgan Employer & Partnership Manager, DWP

'I've spoken with all the Work Coach Team Leaders in the Caerphilly Borough, they & their teams can't speak highly enough of the support being delivered by Caerphilly Cares. It's easy to access & is a 'catch all' support service for our claimants.

In addition, during our Multi agency meeting last week, several of the partners who work across multiple LA's commented on how refreshing it was to see such a collaborative approach to partnership working & support from the local authority to those most vulnerable in our communities.'



5) Haylee Williams
Operations Supervisor, Catering CCBC.

"I would just like to thank you and your team for all your help with one of our meals direct clients, I am pleased to hear that he is still engaging with your team and receiving support when he allows your team to do so. I think Kirsty and Mark would agree that the client was a very private man who very much only allows what he wants to allow. Hearing the updates from your team is positive and by working together the impact that this has made to this gentleman has been brilliant!!!

I recently sat on an emergency planning meeting and have promoted your service, I thought that if there was ever an emergency within the borough what better team to support, the skills and knowledge of your team could play a vital role in ensuring residents needs are met.

Yesterday I answered a free school meal call from a resident who had not received her voucher, she had very little food left and had £6.00 in her bank account by me having a chat with her and providing Caerphilly Cares contact number she was able to have a chat with one of your team. I later received a call from the resident who was in tears that your team was able to help provide her with a food bank voucher. This was a case that pulled on the heart strings, and I am pleased that I was able to sign post and your team were able to help! People are really feeling the pressure of the cost of living out in our communities.

The partnership between service areas have really grown and I look forward to working with the Caerphilly Cares team in the future."

6) Marcia Lewis
Principal Officer, Catering CCBC

"I just wanted to write to you formally to thank you, and all your team for the support you have given my service area over the last few years.

I think it's fair to say that the Covid pandemic strengthened our partnership when Caerphilly Cares supported our service area in helping us coordinate the huge amount calls, we were receiving from members of the community in relation to their FSM deliveries. We had very short notice to set up the FSM delivery service and the Caerphilly Cares team become a vital link in helping us as the catering team in managing the level of calls and expectations of some of our most vulnerable clients within the local community.

During this time, the Caerphilly Cares team played a far wider role as they were able to form strong bonds with many of our customers and were able not only to offer advice on the FSM delivery service but assist our customers with financial support around managing debt, advising on benefits, and maximising income. The team also offered additional advice on tackling food poverty through referrals to Foodbanks, grants for community groups, offering supporting to individuals to access employment support programmes, early intervention with mental health support and



building on partnerships with community groups. All this was achieved with one contact point for our customers which was a great benefit to them.

Over the last few months, the partnership has developed further in the support Caerphilly Cares have offered our Meals Direct customers by assisting our service area to tackling isolation and loneliness and meeting with individual clients to offer advice and support that we are not able to provide.

I believe that the partnership we have developed has enabled the authority to work at its best by linking across departments to meet our clients needs. Caerphilly Cares has become an extension of the Catering team and has assisted us on so many levels to meet our clients needs and raise the profile of the authority of the service they provide to their local community in the most trying times that hit the nation. This formed the foundation that we continue to work in partnership with you today.

I would like to thank you once again for all your support and commitment to our service area and the residents of Caerphilly.”

**7) Steven Evans-Jones
URV Foodbank Operations Manager**

Extract from a press release

“Chair of Rhymney Valley Foodbank, The Reverend Canon Mark Owen said “The Foodbank seen an unprecedented number of people needing our critical life-line service last winter with an increase of 94%” We stand with Trussell Trust to end Foodbanks in the UK but we need your help to achieve this. We are aware the cold, winter months, can be crippling for individuals and families. Please support us however small, to ensure nobody goes hungry over the next few months and beyond. We are very grateful to the continued financial support from Caerphilly County Borough Council. The Caerphilly Cares' directorate provide direct support to food aid agencies across the county borough through their Food Network”

“Again, thank you for all you do for Foodbanks across the county borough.”

**8) Amanda Jones
CEO, Parent Network**

“The project has been a vital referral project for our service users.

The cost-of-living crises has hit our local communities hard, Caerphilly cares service can offer support with complex issues along with short waiting lists, it really is a life line when communities have hit crises point.

Our project has lent on the Caerphilly cares team with a number of referrals and access to grants.”



Success Scenarios and Case Studies

Cost of Living Team/Housing Rents Success Scenarios:

Case 1

Mrs W self referred into the Caerphilly cares team. She had extensive medical problems and had applied for PIP several times but each time was unsuccessful. A member of the team arranged to meet Mrs W in a library which Mrs W felt more comfortable with and she was put at ease. The officer successfully assisted Mrs W to appeal the decision made by DWP, resulting in a £8,000 backdated payment and she was also awarded an additional weekly income of £171. Mrs W couldn't stop thanking the officer for all their support as it had made life changing difference to Mrs W's quality of life.

Case 2

Mr A, an older person from Ynysddu contacted the team as he was struggling with everyday costs. He didn't know where to turn, his family were assisting him with his care needs but he didn't think he was entitled to any further support. One of the team members arranged to visit Mr A at his home as he rarely went out. Mr A was assisted in making a successful claim for Attendance Allowance increasing his annual income by nearly £9,000. Mr B was overjoyed as this would help to pay his winter fuel bills and he wouldn't have to worry about putting the heating on.

Case 3

Mr B from Blackwood worked full time but struggled with health problems. Mr P did not believe he could claim PIP as he worked full time. A team member arranged to contact the resident around their work commitments. After several discussions, a PIP claim was submitted which successfully resulted in an increase in Mr B's annual income by £5,000 per year. This gave Mr B a much better quality of life as his additional income supported to keep Mr B in work.

Case 4

Mr and Mrs C from Cwmcarn contacted their local MP as they were really struggling to cope with the cost of living and increases in their bills. The team was asked to visit to check if Mr C was claiming everything he was entitled to. Mr and Mrs C believed that they would not be eligible to any further benefit support including pension credits. The team worked with Mr and Mrs C to claim various benefits, and helped the couple navigate the complex options that they were entitled to. This resulted in an increase in their annual income by £10,000. Mr and Mrs C said they would never have claimed if it wasn't for the team and that it has made a massive difference to the quality of their lives.

Case 5

After a referral from housing, there was an urgent need to support a resident who had their gas capped as they had no money on their meter. An engineer was unable

to complete an annual the safety service so referred the resident for support. The team completed a hardship grant to clear the debt on the account, and then referred to CAB for some emergency energy vouchers, they also arranged for the gas metre to be uncapped. Next the client was referred for some energy advice and the team is currently working with the customer to maximise their income as they are not claiming all they are entitled to.

Case 6

Mr Y didn't know where to turn as he needed furniture and could not afford to buy any. The team supported them to apply for a hardship grant. Low income and increased cost of living pressures resulted in him really struggling on a daily basis. An income and expenditure assessment showed that they were indeed in crisis and needed some support. The client was so pleased when they had the grant which made a big impact on their home life.

1) Wellbeing Community Connector Case Study

Aim: Help the person engage with the community to reduce social isolation and reduce the pressures on her role as a carer which was impacting on her health and well-being.

Outcomes:

- The person is now living independently due to aids and adaptations put in her home. This with the aim to reduce the risk of falls and accidents.
- The person has made contact with other people who have responsibilities as carers and doesn't feel that she is alone anymore.
- After the advice and intervention received, the person felt empowered and decided not to engage with adult social services teams as she felt better prepared to look after her husband, who experiences dementia.

The story:

Caerphilly cares received a referral from Cwm Rhymni Surgery to engage with patient EC. The surgery staff explained that EC attended an appointment and seemed rather down due to the pressures she was feeling as a carer for her husband, who had Alzheimer's.

The team arranged a home visit to discuss her current well-being and see how EC could be supported.

EC explained that due to the diagnosis of her husband BC's Alzheimers she had been finding it difficult to cope at home and she started clashing with BC because of the intensive situation spending all their time together. BC couldn't be left alone at home either, so EC didn't have any personal time. She explained that she just wished to spend an hour or two a week for herself. EC explained that this situation has started affecting her mood and she was feeling quite low with herself.

During the conversation, EC mentioned as well that she has always been very active and that with BC they always used to go for walks but as their health reduced, they both have stopped. EC explained that she was struggling at home as well, her kitchen has a low level to access it and as there were no aids or adaptations, she was concerned on having a falls. EC also mentioned that on her back garden, the access to it didn't have any grab rails so she struggle to access her garden. Also, her bathroom area was a difficult place as she struggled accessing the toilet as it was too low for her.

EC continued to explain that she wished to find a local place where she could go with BC so they both see other people as well as some personal time. EC explained as well that her and her husband are keen artists so they would like to find a place where they could go to practice their art. BC mentioned that she would also like help from social services to get a worker to come and sit with BC while she is away for an hour or so every week.

Working together the following action plan was made and delivered successfully.

- Referral made to IAA for an OT assessment for EC. This led to adaptations around the problem areas in her house. This will help to prevent any falls and accidents that EC could have.
- Referral made to IAA in order for EC's husband to receive support from the Older People's Team.
- A referral was made to the Carers team in order for her to receive support on her role as a carer for her husband.
- Information about a Dementia coffee morning group at Deri Community Centre given, also information for the art class that happens on Wednesdays at the Winding House in New Tredegar.

With all the above, the outcomes were very positive for EC. She has now received support from the OT team. EC feels more secure and safe and can access the different areas around her house safely which has enabled both of them to benefit from an improved quality of life.

EC has started attending the Dementia support group and BC has engaged nicely with the group. This has made a different to the couple as they are now able to meet other people who are on a similar position than her.

EC has recently joined the art class and informed the team that her son will be visiting a bit more often, so she hopes BC will be going to the art class with him. This will enable EC to have some respite and be able to do her own things.

EC also declined to receive support from IAA for the intervention from the Older People's Team as she explained that now she is engaging in wellbeing activities, she feels much better prepared to take on her role as a carer for her husband.

All of the above work has made a difference to the person's wellbeing and now she is able to carry on doing things independently.

2) Wellbeing Community Connector Case study

Aim: To reduce social isolation and to gain larger circle of friends.

Outcomes:

- Became more independent.
- Gained more confidence leaving the house.
- Rekindled old friendships and made new ones.
- Reporting improvement in their overall wellbeing.

The story

Initial meeting took place with client A in their home surroundings which eased all anxiousness. It became apparent that client A had previously been a very busy person and wanted this back in their life. There has been several personal health and personal circumstances which have resulted in client A feeling with quite low mood most days, then in turn causing isolation.

The team spoke about the strengths of Client A, and all the positives in client A's life presently. Discussing these has been very good for the client to speak out loud and hear. Client A expressing they are ready to leave the house more, being mobile, also willing to catch public transport or a taxi is very good and encouraging too.

Client A and the Wellbeing connector started to look at where to go to engage with new people and begin new friendships Client A chose what groups and venues he would like to visit this being high with priorities due to a visual impairment and the use of a guide dog too. We explored accessible taxi options, and used previous firms that he had used before, and old relationships were able to start again.

With the referral made, Client A and the team member began to visit sessions, firstly it took time to build confidence and feel at ease within the new groups (The Guide dog being a great ice breaker) and surroundings. As each week passed these groups became a great place for Client A and with confidence growing and the overcoming of personal barriers Client A was rightfully proud, also very thankful for the work from the Caerphilly Cares team.

Client A was very sure the involvement from the Wellbeing Connector had been a good experience and believing the work/support carried out had been gratefully appreciated.

3) Penallta Reuse Shop Case Study

Partners: CCBC Waste Management, Caerphilly Cares, Waste Savers, Penallta Reuse Shop

Aim: To work in partnership to promote the shop and it's volunteering opportunities to staff and their family and friends as well as the public at open day coffee mornings



Outcomes:

- Four volunteers signed up and had their inductions with Waste Savers
- One CCBC staff member signed up as part of the Employee Volunteer Scheme
- Relationship built between Caerphilly Cares and Reuse Shop with potential development of team building day in the future as part of the Employee Volunteer Scheme
- Increased awareness amongst CCBC staff of the shop and the volunteering opportunities available

The story:

The shop was set up in October 2022 and is the first of its kind in Caerphilly Borough. The purpose of the shop is to provide an opportunity for good condition items that were destined for the Household Waste Recycling Centre to be repurposed and reused. These items can then be accessed and reused by people for a great price.

The shop was set up in partnership with Waste Savers charity and all profits raised through the shop will be split equally between Waste Savers and CCBC's Mayor's charity.

It has been a huge success and as a result there were occasions when the shop had to ask the public not to donate on certain days to give them time to catch up. Whilst the shop has a small number of paid staff, they require the help of volunteers to support the shop with duties such as donations, stock replenishing and general customer service to keep it going and to help avoid non donation days.

A meeting was set up between the shop, CCBC Waste Management Department and Caerphilly Cares Volunteer Support staff to look into a way of promoting the volunteering opportunities available to staff through the Employee Volunteer Scheme and to also spread the word wider to their friends and family.

Two open day coffee mornings were agreed with social media promotion by the shop and a communications e-mail to staff to let them know about the need for volunteers. One to be held during the week and the other on a Sunday to give people the chance to attend.

At the first open day, a member of staff from Waste Management was asked to pop over by her manager to help and to have a presence from the team. Upon arrival Colette jokingly said, 'I'm not here to volunteer, I do have a day off a week and I'm keeping that!' However, after helping by sorting through and replenishing stock for a couple of hours she then came back to us and said, 'Well I know I said I wasn't here to volunteer, but I have actually really enjoyed myself and would like to offer a couple of hours on my day off'. Colette has now signed up as a Caerphilly Cares member on the Volunteering Wales platform and has had her induction so is ready to start.





As a result of the open days, 3 members of the public also signed up and have had their inductions and will start their roles as soon as their safety boots arrive.

Caerphilly Cares will continue to work in partnership with the shop to promote volunteer opportunities to staff and public as well as having a plan to offer one off team building days for staff to attend the shop when donations have been particularly high to organise and sort through them with a view to the shop not having to have days where they can't accept donations to further avoid good condition items going to landfill.

4) The Pantry/Café Upper Rhymney Valley



Partners: RDP, Facilities CCBC, St Davids Community Centre, Caerphilly Food Network. Caerphilly Cares, parent Network.

Aim: To provide a low cost social supermarket which also doubles as a café in the community centre on the high street in Rhymney.

Outcomes:

- Four part time members of staff to be employed for the café/Pantry
- 2 new projects established to address food poverty and Insecurity.
- Providing a non judgemental space to offer help and advice through Caerphilly Cares Officers.
- To provide low cost food to those struggling with Food Poverty.



The story:

The community Centre is situated on the High Street in Rhymney and is a community venue that provides space for Meithrin / Flying start runs all year term time. It also hosts Keep Fit, Kettle Bells and Beatfit exercise classes.

The parent Network also run play groups from there.

It is the hub of the community which has very few if any community venues for large activities such as carol concerts, music festivals throughout the year. The centre keeps its costs low so that local people can come together to share activities and build a sense of community in Rhymney.

Through multi funding from Rural Development Food for Growth grant, Sustainable Food Network funding from WG and in kind donations of café furniture from facilities and in partnership with Alun Ford and Kevin Lodge the project shortly begins.

The proposal is to provide a multi-functional café and Pantry in the kitchen and lounge area of the Hall at the end of the building.

The grant has paid for changes to the kitchen, the replacement of an internal door and decoration of the kitchen/Café and replacement of carpeted area with vinyl floor.

The café will offer Tea/Coffee Bacon rolls and the like at an affordable price and would be open to all, the entrance to the café would be replaced with its own door accessed from the path as you approach the café.

Advertising would be in the form of banners attached to the fence on the main pavement and with window signage viewable from the pavement.

The café is leased to the Parent Network who are a Social Enterprise and registered at companies' house, staff would be employed via the Parent Network and they would be responsible for Food Hygiene ratings and other statutory obligations including employer liability.

The Pantry element of this is to provide a low-cost food service to the residents, shelving at one end of the room which will stock the food which is for sale but will be covered during café hours with moveable panels.

The pantry Concept is charging a small membership fee of £5.00 which is valid for 6 months, this will entitle you to shop in the pantry for £4.00 a basket.

Each basket would contain.

3 Fruit and veg

2 Chilled items/2 Frozen Items

2 Bread Items

4 Cupboard Staples/1 personal product.

Members can choose the products they select from above once a week.



The contents of the basket will total between £16.00 to £20.00 in value.

Food will come from Fare Share membership and also donations.

The opening hours will allow those working to access the service too, probably between 4 till 6pm.

The Rhymney High Street contains 2 or 3 fast food restaurants, charity shops and a couple of corner shops offering very small amounts of vegetables. Access to the nearest supermarket requires a bus trip to Bargoed.

The access to fresh fruit and vegetables and alongside cookery lessons will enable residents to eat healthier and more costs effectively utilising seasonal, local food.

The café and pantry will encourage enable a healthier lifestyle and access to services in a non-judgemental place.

