



A referral was received from a local GP expressing concerns about a lady in her 70s. The lady lived alone and had recently moved to the area. She was having difficulty making contact with people and was feeling isolated.

The Agent made contact with her. After discussing her interests, the Agent was able to put her in touch with people attending a local chapel. From this, she went on to join a knitting group. The Agent was also able to put her in touch with a well-being and exercise group.

One of her interests was playing Scrabble, although she had recently lost her fellow players due to illness. The Agent was aware of another single lady who enjoyed Scrabble and who lived near to the client. With the permission of both of them, the Agent passed on their contact numbers to each other. The two ladies arranged to meet and they now enjoy regular games of Scrabble in one another's homes.

The Agent has visited the client several times. She says that she is now much happier.

Mr P has cancer. His daughter is extremely worried about him as he does not want to acknowledge his illness. I went to see him and managed to get him to accept some help. He has difficulty getting in and out of the bath, so I referred him to the Adult Help Desk for an OT assessment. I also referred him to Age UK for a benefits check. I contacted Cotswold Care Hospice to see if he could go there one day a week, he subsequently went for an assessment. I referred him to Careline because he did see that this was a good idea. I also got him a trolley on wheels so he can take things from one room to another, without dropping anything. A friend, in his road had an electric reclining chair that she didn't want anymore and he did. I asked the Neighbourhood Wardens to help and they collected it and put it in his sitting room. He had also stopped going to his local club, coffee morning. I thought it would be a good idea if he went again, because his friends are concerned about him and miss him. I told him this and he has started going to the club again and looks as though he's enjoying it.

Mrs W has broken both her wrist and her thumb. She also has macular degeneration and finds getting out more and more difficult, especially as she has to rely on her family for lifts. I have contacted the Stroud VCA so she can register with them for car transport. I have also had details sent to her of the Macular Club which is held monthly in Nailsworth. If she registers with the VCA she will be able to get transport to the club. I have also suggested she join the Maypole Club and have asked the organiser if there are any vacancies. Mrs W wants to come along with a friend and there are vacancies for the two of them.

A Day in the Life of a Village Agent

On a damp cold Cotswold morning my day started with a phone call from sunny Spain. My calls generally don't come from overseas so I was keen to learn how could I possibly be of help to a young man living hundreds of miles away in Valencia (bearing in mind my role is to provide older people in Gloucestershire with easier access to information and services) well..... This particular young man was concerned about his mother who lived in a North Cotswold village and was at the

time in a Gloucestershire hospital. He was due to fly to the UK to visit his mother and wanted information in arranging care at home when she was discharged. He had discovered my number from our website www.villageagents.org.uk So..... I advised him who to speak to at the hospital, emailed him relevant information and arranged to meet him at his mothers on his arrival in the UK later that week.

After allowing myself a very quick cuppa I then leave home and drive to one of the villages on my 'patch' to meet with a group of community volunteers to discuss how best to tackle current issues that older people in the North Cotswolds are dealing with. Their support, advice and local knowledge is invaluable to me. We meet as always in a local coffee shop (choosing coffee but NO delicious looking cake). Some topics that we chat about on this particular morning include a) transport to social groups/leisure clubs b) loneliness and isolation c) existing groups for older residents in the village. Between ourselves we agree to take away various 'actions' to work toward better provisions of services.

Next I'm off to visit Mr and Mrs A who live a few miles away. They had called me after they saw one of my articles in a local parish magazine. Mrs A is having mobility issues and wants to talk about a Blue Badge. I am able to explain the process and offer to have an application form sent to their home. I establish that Mrs A may be entitled to extra financial support by way of Attendance Allowance. Due to her disabilities it is clear that to apply for this allowance she would need help. I agree to make the necessary arrangements for the benefits agency to contact her. During our conversation (with another cuppa and this time a chocolate biscuit!) other issues come to light and I make arrangements for free smoke alarms to be fitted and suggest that I make a referral to the Adult Help Desk to discuss the provision of various equipment in the home.

Later I complete relevant confidential referrals for Mrs A and check my emails. One of the emails I receive contains details and information relating to funding support for local organisations. I am able to forward this on to my group of contacts/volunteers/charities within my 'patch' (Willersey, Saintbury, Weston Sub Edge, Aston Sub Edge, Mickleton, Hidcote Boyce, Chipping Campden, Ebrington, Blockley, Paxford and Draycott). Whilst doing this I receive a call from Mr S who simply wants me to give him dates for the next Hard of Hearing sessions in Mickleton and Campden. Mr. S is a regular at the quarterly sessions although missed the last one as he was away visiting his daughter . We have a chat about his holiday and how his arthritis is and then finally I call it a day.

CAB Stroud asked me if I could visit a man to help him write a letter, complete an Experian form, and return it to CAB, so they could support him regarding default letters that he has been receiving. He was unable to get to their office himself. I visited the man, and found out that it was a small sum of £1.17 which he was owing, and he could not recall who he owed the money to. He had always been careful to settle bills promptly. He had been receiving the letters demanding the money for months, but he did not know how to respond.

Whilst with the man I phoned New Day, who contact people on behalf of credit card companies. I was told that it was probably a small amount of interest which was gradually building up over the months, and as it was such a small amount they would write it off, which was done there and then.

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What a relief for the man, and for me, as it saved me the job of letter writing and form filling! It also saved New Day money on sending out all those default notices. A good outcome all round.

