



BUDDY SUPPORT **NEWSLETTER**

Spring 2025



I hope that everyone is safe and well, and my first line will just be another 'Thank You' for your ongoing help and support to the charity as a whole, and to me as Buddy Support Lead. I know I've said it before, but I am always blown away by the time, kindness and support that you all give our community.

Well, what a long, wet and cold winter that has been- Spring is very welcome. Let's look forward to some longer and brighter days, with a little more sun (please!) Many prescriptions have been delivered, newsletters posted and shops done for people in the pouring rain or cold biting winds. Hopefully when venturing out to support others in the coming months the weather will be a little kinder to us all!

It has been another busy period for us all as volunteers, buddies and staff, whether in the Care Shop or out in the community. The Care Shop figures below show the increase in need in the Shop alone:

Visitors to Care Shop	7539	(6723 end of 2023)
Calls to Care Shop	7486	(7131 end of 2023)
Calls into Care Shop	4364	(3307 end of 2023)

With the Care Shop being the 'go to hub' for those in need, and referrals made following a lot of the visits, many times for support from buddies and volunteers, your help is invaluable. We envisage need growing year on year with the pressures on voluntary carers, loss of winter fuel allowance, loneliness in our relatively rural and isolated community to name just a few. Befrienders, carers support and groups run to support so many is essential, and 'Thank You' again, for any part any of your play in this. It truly doesn't matter how little or often you are able to support, every small act helps us and so many.

We are currently looking for a new volunteer to support in the Care Shop on a Friday morning between 9 and 1pm if anyone may be interested in this. This will be from May onwards. Working in the Care Shop involves answering the phones and dealing with enquiries from people visiting the shop in person. We do need to keep records of those attending the shop for statistical reasons. A lot of our funding now to enable us to continue the running of the charity relies on statistics and numbers. We therefore keep an excel spreadsheet of people attending the shop whether in person or by phone. Emails are sent to other branches of the charity with referrals, and Buddy Assisted transfer forms completed for people that have appointments and need support to attend their appointments. No prior experience is needed with computers. We have a couple of volunteers in the shop (and I don't think they will mind me saying) that had absolutely no previous experience with computers and especially laptop). They are now sending emails, completing excel spreadsheets and supporting the staff in the shop amazingly. Full support is always given by the member of staff in the shop that day. If anyone feels they would like to join our team you would be so welcome. I have made friends for life who are volunteers in the Care Shop from working with them, and we all support each other.

In May we are hoping to start running the Car Boots again weather permitting! We have three amazing volunteers supporting us with this. We inevitably need further support for each car boot at times if anyone is interested. They are moving from the Cricket field to Selsey Academy this year.

If you know of anyone in our community for whom English is their second language, we are able to offer free English support with classes to be held either as a group or individual one to one support. Don't hesitate to spread the word to let people know we can fully support in this area.

We have a new volunteer called Maria that is supporting with the Sign Language classes previously held by Vanessa. A massive thank you to you both for offering your knowledge and expertise to help people to learn this valuable resource. The new classes are starting on the 5th March 2025.

We are also working closely with SGN around all issues relating to energy. We know with many losing their winter fuel allowance, the general costs of high energy bills and the cold and wet winter that we have had, many in our community are suffering.

We are able to provide extensive information and support around issues relating to:

General energy advice

Information relating problems with condensation

Co2 advice and information, as well as alarms for those in need

Referrals to other agencies such as Household Support Fund or Better Housing Better Health for emergency fuel vouchers or additional energy support

Support with debts/ benefits

Support to access the priority services register- The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free UK wide service which provides extra advice and support, including when there's an interruption to your electricity or gas supply.

Attached to the email sending this newsletter, I have included some information around Carbon Monoxide and Gas Safety for everyone's information.

Again, if information and support could help you, or someone you know, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us.

Buddy info

Below is a snapshot of the support that you have helped and supported with since July 2024 to date:

Prescription deliveries- 86

Pet Pantry deliveries- 147

Small shops- 14

Welfare checks- 4

Support to take a lady's BP- 2

Smoke alarm batteries changed- 3

Delivering 8400 newsletters plus an additional 400 to Hyde Houses in September and March.

Other support such as sitting with a cared for to allow the carer to attend a social group, taking pets to the vets for housebound users, defrosting a freezer,

lifts given to allow people to attend groups and activities, meals provided to a family in need. This is to name just a few!

I don't think there are many communities in our country who can say that they can offer similar support, and think we should feel so proud that we can do this and all work together for the greater good- Thank you.

Please do send feedback to me if you feel there are better ways of communicating with you all or supporting you in any way. We want to make sure you are all supported and feel valued.

Stay safe everyone and take care,

Katy