



How we've been helping disabled people and their families in Barnsley during Covid 19 Lockdown (17 March-28 May 2020)

**Passionate
about
possibilities.**

We've extended our advice line hours, set up home working to keep staff safe, filled forms in by pre-booked telephone appointments, established safe and well checks, telephone befriending and online support groups whilst letting people know we're still here to support them

Choices - Advice and Guidance

- We've responded to **613** enquiries from local residents
- Supported **508** residents through our advice service
- We've undertaken safe and well checks with **556** residents
- Supported residents to claim **£ 302520** in benefit entitlement

Impact: 89% reported reduced anxiety, 84% reported better understanding of entitlements, 76% reported feeling more confident, 48% had more money to live on

Post-lockdown issues: demand for benefit form completion with resumption of renewal /assessments, increase in mental health issues, increase in unemployment, increase in poor health, fuel debt

Chances - Opportunities and Skills

As well as supporting people with befriending calls our volunteers have enjoyed and participated in:

- Training on fuel poverty and COVID 19, Virtual befriending and top 10 tips for mindfulness
- Whatsapp group to keep connected with each other
- Weekly phone calls to support their mental wellbeing and help keep them motivated
- NHS Top 5 tips for maintaining mental wellbeing during Covid -19
- Zoom cream tea/party planned for volunteers week

Post-lockdown issues: anxiety, motivation, fear of infection

Connections - Social Inclusion

- We've undertaken **198 befriending calls** to help reduce loneliness
- Delivered Good Neighbours postcards to display in windows
- Launched **Virtual happy café** with weekly coffee/quiz events
- We've set a target to deliver **100 wellbeing packs** by June

Impact: Clients reported 88% improved emotional wellbeing, 100% feeling more connected to their community, 84% feeling less isolated

Post-lockdown issues: Increased anxiety about going out, increased isolation as family members reduce contact, gap in community services due to loss of funding/income

Changes - Healthy Lifestyle

Our lockdown activity has been to promote healthy lifestyles and to raise awareness of common issues we've identified through our own experience or through conversations with local residents and focussed on:

- Mental health awareness
- Hints and tips on keeping healthy and eating well during lockdown
- Guidance on energy awareness and keeping cool efficiently
- Links and signposting to virtual exercise classes

Post-lockdown issues: weight gain, alcohol levels, anxiety