

<p><b>Project:</b></p> <p><b>Handy Persons Services: Promoting Friends in Action</b></p>	<p><b>Amount:</b></p> <p><b>£3,000</b></p>
<p><b>Proposal:</b></p> <p>Support Age UK Wirral to recruit additional volunteers to its 'Friends in Action' service and promote this service to potential users.</p>	
<p><b>Rationale:</b></p> <p>Wirral Council's former Handy Persons Service operated through Supported Housing for vulnerable individuals up until 2013 when it ceased due to financial efficiencies being made. Supporting Housing still provides a hospital discharge service but does not fund private works. Prior to this, a Handy Persons Service was made available in the Housing Market Renewal Area until approximately 2010. In the current climate, it makes financial sense to strengthen an existing service rather than seek to establish a new service.</p> <p>A borough-wide Handy Person Service exists within Age UK Wirral's 'Friends in Action' service. Friends in Action not only offers friendship and companionship but also support with a range of everyday practical tasks; transport to activities or appointments, shopping and prescription collection, help with odd jobs and occasional gardening. Friends in Action works in partnership with other services to ensure that individuals are signposted to appropriate services if they have additional needs.</p> <p>Referrals can be taken from any source, such as doctors, nurses, social workers, family, carers and self-referral. Individuals referred may be socially isolated older people living in their own home, housebound or lonely, people with little or no family support, people who struggle to get to and from medical appointments and those who require low level support.</p> <p>Volunteers deliver the service. They can specify which service they would prefer to get involved in, where they would like to volunteer and how often. Volunteers can specify which days they are available to volunteer on, and what they would like to do.</p> <p>Age UK (Wirral) has only a limited number of volunteers within the Friends in Action service who are dedicated to carrying out maintenance tasks.</p> <p>Wallasey Constituency is a key strategic area for the organisation's development. In a public consultation conducted by Age UK Wirral within the Constituency area, it was highlighted that local people wanted a greater presence of the organisation in their area.</p>	

**Detail of proposal:**

Funding will enable a marketing campaign, focused upon the six wards across Wallasey Constituency, to recruit volunteers. Through the use of social media this will inevitably attract volunteers from across Wirral which will be additionally beneficial to Age UK Wirral. This campaign will be targeted in particular at local businesses (builders, plumbers, electricians, etc.) who either themselves or their staff have existing skills and may be willing to give up a small amount of time to give back to their community to help others.

This campaign will be linked to Community Action Wirral which is in the process of adopting an online volunteering brokerage tool (Volunteer Connect) to increase the number of high quality volunteering opportunities, in line with its contract with Wirral Council. This will provide a simple online process for organisations to advertise volunteering roles and for potential and active volunteers to make their time and skills available and apply for positions. As a 'Volunteer Centre', Community Action Wirral can also assist in the promotion of volunteering opportunities with the Friends in Action service.

This approach to recruitment will not only generate interest in volunteering with maintenance tasks, but also volunteering to help deliver the wider services and support provided through the Friends in Action service.

Following the recruitment of additional volunteers, funding will enable a further marketing campaign across the Constituency to promote the Friends in Action service (including the Handy Person Service) to potential users, families and carers of potential users and practitioners.

There is also an opportunity to explore a partnership with Wirral Metropolitan College to enable students to carry out skills they are currently training to achieve in a supervised real-life setting.

<b>Anticipated breakdown of spend:</b>	Marketing campaign – recruitment of volunteers	£1,000
	Marketing campaign – Friends in Action service	£2,000

**Other options considered:**

Contact was made with twenty-five Registered Providers of social housing with stock in Wirral; less than half provide a Handy Persons Service for their tenants. There was limited interest in potentially expanding an existing service across Wallasey Constituency. In any event this would require more than a 12-month commitment to fund and also giving consideration to sustainability this was discounted as an option.

<b>Committee Priorities impacted:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving personal wellbeing</li> <li>• Improving economic wellbeing</li> <li>• Improving neighbourhood wellbeing</li> </ul>
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<b>Wirral 2020 pledges impacted:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people live well</li> <li>• People with disabilities live independently</li> <li>• Young people are ready for work and adulthood</li> <li>• Attractive local environment</li> <li>• Wirral's neighbourhood are safe</li> <li>• Workforce skills match business needs</li> </ul>
<b>Public Health Outcomes impacted (Y/N):</b>	Yes
<b>Lead Officer/s:</b>	Caroline Laing (Constituency Manager - Wallasey) Ray Collings (Senior Manager - Community Support Services) Age UK Wirral