

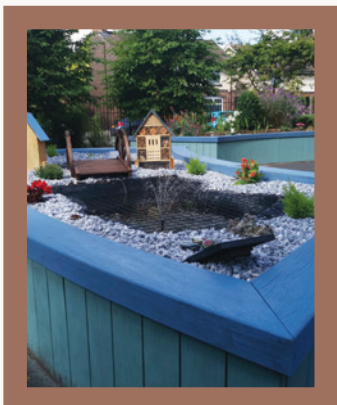
# Belong Life

SUMMER 2024



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**BELONG**  
VILLAGES





## Word from the team

**Though it may have taken summer a while to get going this year, there has still been much cheer and optimism throughout the season and with that we have an abundance of happy news from across the organisation.**

First, we have a few changes to announce: we are pleased to say that in the general manager team, Caroline Ray and Cheryl Davies move to Belong Chester and Belong Macclesfield, respectively. Whilst at Belong Crewe, support manager Caroline Anthony has advanced to general manager, having more than 'earned her stripes' to lead her own team.

Congratulations also go to Belong at Home for their exceptional result earning a place in the national top 20 home care groups for the seventh year running based on independent customer reviews with homecare.co.uk. What's more, the Warrington and Wigan teams, both rated 10 out of 10 by customers, picked up regional awards for attaining perfect scores.

After taking the crown for Best Care Provision 2021 at the HealthInvestor Seniors Housing Awards, we're thrilled to be nominated for two awards this year, with results due in the coming weeks.

We've more accomplishments to speak of, this time with recognition from both government and royalty. Belong Atherton's Jemma Sharratt has been bestowed the Chief Nurse Adult Social Care Gold Award in a special Belong visit from Chief Nurse for Social Care, Deborah Sturdy.

And from Belong Macclesfield, Laura Bartsted and Caylie Jones were invited to Buckingham Palace to rub shoulders with the Royal Family at a garden party recognising distinguished work in guests' fields.

All are fantastic achievements for everyone involved, and within these pages you'll find more good news, including Belong Crewe's Silver Rainbow Pride making a welcome return, a visit from the Wigan Warriors, and radio's newest DJs who've been found residing at Belong Warrington.

Don't forget, you can share your own stories on our social media channels – we're always pleased to hear from our community and see what you're getting up to in everyday Belong life.

### Sue Goldsmith

Belong Chief Operating Officer



## New managers

**Belong Chester, Belong Macclesfield and Belong Crewe, have named new managers, marking a career milestone for the rising stars, and a new era for the villages.**

### Cheryl Davies - Belong Macclesfield

**Belong has named Cheryl Davies as the new general manager for its Macclesfield village, marking a welcome return to the community.**

Her latest move in a care career spanning more than three decades sees Cheryl return to Macclesfield, where she was formerly support manager before being promoted to general manager at sister village Belong Crewe.

Now, back at the village in the role of general manager, she has a wider brief and ambitions to build on its strengths. Cheryl explains: "It's wonderful to return to Belong Macclesfield. Whilst I've been away, the village and team have attained significant milestones and I plan to continue this success to reach more people.

"There are many familiar faces, including a dozen colleagues from when we opened 17 years ago – they're still here! It really is a testament to Belong as an employer; it's a fantastic place to work and I'm thrilled to be back."



## fulfil career ambitions

**“ We're very pleased to appoint our 'homegrown' managers to head up our Chester, Crewe and Macclesfield villages. They all have an intricate knowledge of our organisation, our villages, our customers' needs and with their proven track records ensuring exceptional standards of care, we're more than confident they will be an asset to the continued success of the teams. ”**

*~ Susan Goldsmith, Chief Operating Officer at Belong*

### Caroline Ray - Belong Chester

**Caroline Ray has been appointed the new general manager for its Chester village, taking the helm of the pioneering intergenerational community.**

The latest move in a career spanning more than three decades sees her join from sister village Belong Macclesfield, where her inspirational leadership saw its team pick up a number of industry accolades, including an 'outstanding' score for its care provision from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), as part of an overall 'good' rating. It also holds the Platinum Gold Standards Framework status for end-of-life care provision.

Speaking of her appointment, Caroline said: "I'm very excited that my next career step is at this wonderful community for all ages. Our intergenerational village has been attracting national and international attention since its official opening, last year, on the back of the compelling benefits being experienced by young and old alike."



### Caroline Anthony - Belong Crewe

**Caroline Anthony has been promoted to new general manager for Belong Crewe, marking a step up for the experienced care leader.**

She takes the helm following five years as the village's registered manager with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), responsible for its 24-hour care and nursing provision for 72 residents.

Caroline's inspirational leadership has, to-date, seen the village maintain its status as Crewe's only CQC Outstanding-rated care home. She was also instrumental in its reaccreditation of the Gold Standards Framework Quality Hallmark Award for end-of-life care provision, as well as supporting colleagues to achieve a number of industry accolades, including wins at the National Dementia Care Awards and the Great British Care Awards.

Caroline commented: "It's wonderful to progress to leader of our village. The career development opportunities at Belong are exceptional and as a result, we have a fantastic team of people who genuinely love what they do and make it the special place it is."





# A Customer's View: Elaine Jones

Nothing is more important to Belong than our customers, which is why we love hearing about their experiences.

For this issue, we spoke to **Elaine Jones**, 82, one of Belong Wigan's newest apartment tenants, along with daughter, Sue. Having moved in just two weeks prior, we hear what the process was like for them.



*Pictured: Elaine - Belong Wigan*

"We'd asked for some recommendations on Facebook and Belong kept coming up - people spoke highly of them," Sue begins, sharing how she and her mother first heard of Belong's daycare service, Experience Days. "Mum's 82 and has a dementia diagnosis and we were exploring options for things for her to do in the day."

Elaine takes over: "We met Charlene [the village's experience coordinator] over lunch in the bistro and she was lovely, so, I decided I'd give it a go. I loved it! The team are very good, and I get to take part in everything going on - I'm a Scrabble fanatic and I'm pleased this is one of many things to choose from."

## Apartment ambitions

It was a conversation with another customer, that got Elaine thinking about potentially making the village her permanent home. She explains: "I'd made friends with Kath, and she invited me to look at her apartment. It's on the ground floor and her sitting doors open up into the courtyard. Having seen how lovely it was, I wanted to find out more."

Sue continues: "We enquired with the front of house team if we could have a formal viewing and they showed us a number of options that were available. Mum chose an upper floor apartment with two big windows overlooking the main road, so she can watch the goings on. It's lovely; nice and bright and she loves it here."

"We'd looked at other sheltered schemes, but nothing felt quite right. Here, she has the activities, visits the bistro every day, and if things change, she has the option of living on the households. I think, most importantly, Mum was happy to choose to live here, and that was key for us."

## On the doorstep

Elaine shares more about what she gets up to at the village. She says: "I like going to the group exercise classes and soon I'll be doing one-to-one sessions with Lee [the village's exercise specialist] - I used to go to balance classes, so it will be nice to continue with this. I also enjoy visiting the hair salon once a week. Not so much a fan of the bingo though, I tend to give that one a miss!"

"I didn't want to go into a 'home', I like being independent. Living here, I get time on my own, like I used to. And, if I want to speak to someone, I only need to pop downstairs."

Sue finishes: "We've also got the Belong at Home team popping in soon for an assessment to find out more about what they offer and see if they can help Mum with anything."

"With Mum here, it really brings a lot of peace of mind for me and my brother. We can even bring Jacob for visits - not all places are pet friendly. He's like a grandson to Mum and is a big part of our lives, so when we come, we all go for a walk around the canals - it really is an ideal set up for the whole family."

**If you would like to contribute to the next 'A Customer's View' column, please pass on your details to a member of staff or email the editor at: [tracy.brookes@belong.org.uk](mailto:tracy.brookes@belong.org.uk)**



# Newcastle's Blooming Lovely Thanks to Community Support

*Pictured (L-R): Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme general manager, Josephine Mollison, Belong Recruitment Business Partner, Lisa Armstrong, and students from The Princes Trust and Stoke-on-Trent College. Pictured right: The Garden at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme.*

**B**elong Newcastle-under-Lyme's dementia-friendly garden has enjoyed a garden makeover with the help of local people as it vies to be crowned the town's best community garden.

Thanks to team spirit, camaraderie and some extra pairs of hands from young adults from The Prince's Trust and Stoke-on-Trent College, the refreshed Lower Street care operator's gardens offer a calm oasis open to the public as well as those residing at the care village.

The addition of two ponds have added an abundance of underwater life into the village community, whilst a flourishing vegetable garden and herbs wall provide homegrown ingredients for use in the onsite bistro. Craft projects for the village's older residents have helped provide features including ceramic toadstools and mushrooms, with painted pebbles adding a splash of colour.

Even the seaside has been brought inland, with a bucket and spade sandpit proving popular with visitors, as Emma Palin, experience and heritage co-ordinator at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme, explains:

"We consulted with our customers about what they wanted, and they were brimming with ideas, and many got involved, personally. The result is a spectacular experience of ideas coming to life through colour, smells, tastes and textures to offer something truly special for everyone to enjoy."

The courtyard and gardens form part of the village's central hub, opening out from its public bistro and the integrated Belong Heritage Gallery, the town's oldest building dating from the 17th century. Today, the gallery documents Newcastle history, arts, and culture through exhibitions, as well as the Old Pomona Inn and Sammy Bell's tea rooms which pay homage to the building's past as a public house and as the town's only pottery, respectively.

Belong enlisted the help of The Prince's Trust and Stoke-on-Trent College, with young volunteers joining residents,



colleagues and independent living apartment tenants Paul Gray and Eileen Allman to update the grounds. After weeding and laying foundations, raised planter beds have been painted two-tone to incorporate forget-me-not blue in a nod to the flower commonly associated with dementia. A hedgehog house and bug hotels have also been added encourage to wildlife into the area.

The gardens have been entered into the borough's Newcastle in Bloom competition, for which results will be revealed next month. Similarly, Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme is amongst representatives for the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Heart of England in Bloom entry for the Business Improvement District category.

Emma continues: "Now that summer has finally arrived, we've never seen our garden so busy! Our customers and the community are really enjoying the new environment, and the seaside is certainly proving to be a hit as we enjoy the warmer weather. It's the perfect spot to relax and unwind and we invite everyone to come and enjoy our peaceful oasis!"



*Pictured: Belong apartment tenants, Eileen Allman and Paul Gray, who also volunteered for the project.*



# Memory Lane...

**B**elong Crewe resident Ivy Hart (104), who lives on Britannia household, is an accomplished singer and used to teach children with learning disabilities. We spoke to her about her experiences for this issue of *Belong Life*.

Ivy was born in Crewe in 1919. She attended the ordinary school on Bedford Street in the town, and from a young age, her talent for singing was recognised, and she sang in churches in the local area.

Sadly, Ivy's father died when she was four years old.

"Despite being a widow, my mother made sure that she could afford to pay for singing lessons," she says.

## Preston and Abergele

Ivy met her husband, George, who was in the Royal Air Force and worked at the Crewe Municipal Buildings at the time, at a dance hall in Crewe when she was in her mid-20s, and they moved to Preston, where his family were from. Unfortunately, George died a few years later, and Ivy moved back to Crewe.

She later moved to Abergele, North Wales, where she lived for many years, a time on which she looks back on with fondness:

"I loved living in Abergele," says Ivy. "I had a bungalow by the mill and a dog, and I used to love walking along the beaches and in the countryside. I carried on singing in a choir. It was a very happy time."



Front row left to right - MRS ROBINSON, MRS COOPER (DEP), MRS HAYES (HEADMISTRESS), MRS FRASER, MRS WHITTAKER.  
Back row left to right - MRS HART, MRS ROONEY, MRS MRS FORKUSON, MRS SIMPSON.



Ivy with Mayor, Cllr Dawn Clark at the village's Crewe Pride event

## Making a difference

Ivy would later return to Crewe to be nearer some of her other family, and in her 50s, she became a teacher at a school for boys with severe learning disabilities.

"I did this for about nine or 10 years and found it very satisfying. We had some real success helping their development."

While she doesn't have any children, Ivy has two nieces, her brothers' daughters, who she often spends time with, along with Rachel, her niece Pam's daughter, who accompanies her on trips back to Abergele.

## Life at Belong

Ivy's first experiences of Belong were visiting her brother Arthur, who lived on Royal Scot household. Both Ivy and her family loved the care that he received so much that Ivy expressed that she would like to move there if she was one day unable to live on her own.

This time came in February, after she had a fall at her home. According to her family, Ivy was ecstatic when she got the news that she had managed to secure accommodation and was able to move in.

Ivy can be encouraged to sing by colleagues, but she takes more pride in playing recordings of her performing, and she likes to attend any music-related activities at the village. She continues to be visited by family, including niece, Kate, whom she calls 'lovely Kate'.

Ivy was recently unwell, but after recovering, she is planning another trip to Abergele, this time supported by the Britannia household team.



# Crewe Pride for Older Community Returns for 2024

Pictured: Resident Margaret (centre, right) and Belong at Home community support workers Kate, Helen and Donna

**S**ilver Rainbow Pride, the annual celebration of LGBTQ+ life and culture, kicked off the Crewe Pride 2024 season as the colourful gala dedicated to the over 55s made a welcome return to the town over the weekend.

Hosted by not-for-profit dementia specialist, Belong, in partnership with sexual health charity, Body Positive Cheshire & North Wales and its social network, Silver Rainbows, guests of all ages were invited to the Brookhouse Drive care village to revel in the festivities with live entertainment from Music in Mind, sing-along with Dame Dolly, and a fashion catwalk parade competition.

Joining the event, Crewe Town Mayor, Cllr Dawn Clark, along with representatives from Crewe Police Cheshire Constabulary, and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service brought the community together for face painting, tombola and stalls, sweet treats and a barbecue.

The yearly celebration began in 2018, with this year's event coming at the close of Pride Month, celebrated around the world every June in recognition of the 1969 Stonewall Riots. The demonstration is widely considered to be the defining event marking the beginning of the gay rights movement in the US and around the world, with Silver Rainbow Pride being scheduled almost 55 years of the event.

Jessica Butler, experience coordinator at Belong Crewe, said: "We're thrilled that Silver Rainbow Pride has now become a regular fixture in the Crewe calendar as it's important to us that everyone can be themselves and express who they are. Many of the older community have memories of living in a society when it was illegal for them to love their partners, and as well as the events at Stonewall, our day is designed to say that no matter age or who you love, they have the support of Crewe."

Cllr Dawn Clark, Mayor of Crewe, added: "Such an honour as Mayor of Crewe to open this special event. Well done to Jess and her team at Belong, supported by Body Positive."

Belong's pride initiative won the Volunteer Award at Cheshire Pride Awards 2023 for the work supporting the local, older LGBTQ+ community. Across the Belong group of care village and home care services in the North West and West Midlands, the not-for-profit organisation has implemented the Skills for Care LGBTQ+ learning framework for its teams, equipping them with the knowledge, values and best practice to support its lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans gender and other customers, whose needs can differ from others.



Belong customers enjoy the community celebrations, joined by Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue.



# Belong at Home appoints Emma Gorton as it grows service

**B**elong at Home has promoted Emma Gorton to lead its Didsbury and Altrincham service as it widens its support to more older people in the south Manchester region.

Helping people live as independently as possible with a little extra assistance including one-to-one personal care, housekeeping, running errands and offering companionship, a new brief sees Emma promoted to head up the team of community support workers based at the Palatine Road care village, Belong Morris Feinmann. The team support tenants of the village's independent living apartments, as well as older people living in the wider community.

Customers of the not-for-profit home care agency can also benefit from use of the village's amenities, including a bistro, hair salon, and exercise studio. There is also opportunity to participate in a varied experiences programme, giving the chance to build new friendships.

### Vocational calling

After a successful career as an office manager, Emma made the move to care following a period looking after her mother prior to her passing. Having struggled to return to the office environment, she embarked on a new vocation – despite not having professional experience or relevant qualifications.

She joined Belong at Home, undertaking on-the-job training designed for those who are new to the sector as part of a comprehensive induction programme. Since then, Emma has gone on to achieve qualifications in Health and Social Care, allowing her to develop her expertise and progress to more senior positions.



### Making a difference

Speaking of her promotion, Emma Gorton, team leader at Belong at Home Didsbury & Altrincham, said: "I'm thrilled to be leading our wonderful team – I have great passion and enthusiasm to make a difference to the lives of adults living with dementia, and I plan to build on our strengths whilst expanding our highest standard of care for the benefit of everyone in the local community."

Andy Shield, business manager at Belong at Home, added: "We are delighted for Emma as she takes the next step of her career. She has been an integral part of the team for a number of years now and her commitment to providing exceptional support to customers is exemplary. Congratulations on a well-deserved promotion!"



Belong at Home, Didsbury & Altrincham



Belong at Home, Wigan



Belong at Home, Crewe



Belong at Home, Macclesfield team



Belong at Home, Warrington



Belong at Home, Newcastle-under-Lyme

## Seven Years at the Top for Belong at Home

**C**arers at Belong at Home, the home care service operated by not-for-profit organisation Belong, are celebrating after securing a place in the UK's top home care groups for the seventh year in a row.

Based on independent reviews on leading comparison website, [homecare.co.uk](http://homecare.co.uk), Belong at Home teams throughout the North West and West Midlands have been named in the country's Top 20 Large & Mid-size Home Care Groups 2024 – the only not-for-profit service in the country to have won the award every year since 2018.

The result comes feedback from client and family reviews, with the Belong at Home's care operator's Warrington and Wigan teams each picking up additional regional awards after attaining 100% satisfaction review scores.

One daughter of a client in south Manchester wrote: "Belong at Home has been wonderful in helping us as a family to support Mum in her own home after her dementia diagnosis. The caring and well-trained team is incredibly dedicated, creative, kind and resourceful."

Another said: "On time, cheerful, attentive. As well as the practical day-to-day things, the carers are genuinely good company and are making my life much easier, and Mum's life longer and better. Happy!"

Supporting people in their homes, as well as those residing in the Belong village apartments to live independently, Belong at Home provides rigorous training to its team of carers, who support older people with one-to-one personal care, housekeeping, food preparation, as well as running errands, helping with excursions and offering companionship. Clients

also have the option to take advantage of the Experience Days day care service at their local Belong village, for which the team can assist with transport.

Andrew Shield, head of operations at Belong at Home, said: "We are very pleased that the hard work and dedication of our teams is recognised by our customers and their families, and we are grateful for their feedback – it really is encouraging. They are the experts in what they need, and we are privileged to support them to live their lives as independently as they can."

The accolade comes as the organisation continues its recruitment drive, providing opportunities for support workers, as well as training roles for local people new to care. Its 'for people, not profit' status enables it to continuously reinvest in its team to provide award-winning care to customers. Belong at Home is one of the few community care operators to recompense colleagues for travel time between appointments.



**Warrington and Wigan teams each received additional regional awards after attaining 100% satisfaction review scores.**

## High commendations all round



Julie Hooper, senior community support worker, Belong at Home Warrington.



Iain Wheelton Belong Chester Resident

**A**t the Stars of Social Care Awards, Belong at Home Warrington's Julie Hooper did us proud, picking up a 'Highly Commended' certificate in the Reducing Social Isolation category.

Judges said: "Julie was able to break down barriers and change people's perceptions through building an unbreakable trust with her client, supporting a lady in her own home who had gradually become incredibly isolated and lonely following her dementia diagnosis. Her client now has the confidence to communicate with new people and is able to live without fear."

Meanwhile, the inaugural National Dementia Care Awards also saw Belong Chester resident Iain Wheelton awarded 'Highly Commended' from judges for the Inspiring Volunteer Award, for his work with The Nursery in Belong.

They said: "At 84 years old, Iain shows no sign of slowing down. A talented and charismatic entertainer, Iain believes in the power of music and movement in supporting the children and their "grandfriends" living with dementia. Absolutely inspirational – Iain's efforts are more than deserving of high commendation."



# Smiling Phil Returns to Racecourse After 60 Years

Pictured Right : Phil and Louise at Belong Warrington.



**B**elong Warrington resident, Phil Warburton, spent the day at Haydock Park Racecourse, enjoying the excitement of each race, the anticipation awaiting bets to come in, and the chance to revel in the atmosphere with fellow racing fans. Accompanied by experience coordinator, Louise Kelly, the pair cheered on their horses before taking in the course's brass band in the spring sunshine and sharing Phil's favourite brandy tipple.

Louise shares more: "Everyone who knows Phil knows how much he loves his horse racing. He hasn't been able to attend in-person for some time and a big part of our role is creating happy memories for our residents and helping them achieving their ambitions. So, we reached out to the community and when we surprised him with the tickets, he couldn't stop smiling!"



Pictured: Haydock Racecourse

Inheriting his love of horses from his parents, a young Phil spent much of his teenage years grooming his favourite animal, admiring their strength and beauty and eventually coming to own his own, Amber Sprite. Due to health ailments resulting from a motorcycle accident, the former carpenter hasn't been able to return to the landmark racecourse since his last visit in 1963.

More recently, 76-year-old Phil has become accustomed to watching his favoured pastime on the television, before his support workers set out to create an extra special day for their resident. Having approached horse racing organisation, The Jockey Club, and transport firm Direct Taxis, their plan for an unforgettable day came to fruition.

Speaking of his experience, Phil said: "The racecourse was very much as I remember but it's a lot busier now! I'm grateful to Louise for making it all happen and although Lady Luck wasn't with us, it was a fantastic experience and this beats taking home a prize pot – I won just by being there."

Louise continued: "Phil had the most wonderful day and we're thrilled everything came together for him. Thank you to The Jockey Club, Haydock Park Racecourse, and Direct Taxis for their support. The kindness of our community really is inspiring."

# Golden Oldies: Warrington Welcomes Newest Radio DJs

Pictured Right: Diane Wrench (seated), with Radio Warrington's Andy Green and Belong Warrington experience coordinator, Louise Kelly.

**R**adio's newest disc jockeys have debuted in Warrington as a group of octogenarians teamed up with the town's community radio station, taking to the airwaves to delight audiences with a special show recorded at their village.

The enthusiasts enlisted the expertise of Radio Warrington to support them to create their own hour-long show. Presenters, Andy Green and Brian Spooner gave their broadcast undergraduates a taste of their world, training them in all things radio, followed by interviews and the chance to put their skills to the test by introducing their favourite songs.



# Challenge Cup Excitement Reaches Fever Pitch in Atherton

Pictured: Belong Atherton customers Peter, Ken and Dorothy with experience coordinator, Kim Calland (centre, right) and Wigan Warriors Community Foundation's Tyler Roberts (far left) and Jack Corless (far right).

**T**he rugby clash between Wigan Warriors and Warrington Wolves was the occasion for much excitement at Belong Atherton as the village team welcomed Warriors representatives to record a personal message for its sporting heroes whilst enjoying a special preview of the club's recent trio of silverware wins.

Ahead of the Challenge Cup final showdown, some of the Cherry and Whites' biggest fans relished getting to meet the trophies as the incumbent holders of the League Leaders' Shield, Super League, and World Club Challenge.

The visit from the club's Community Foundation saw residents and apartment tenants finding out more about Warriors life, asking questions and sharing happy memories from years gone by. Later, they recorded a good luck message for the players as part of a wider video of well wishes featuring local people.

### Die hard fans

Kim Calland, experience coordinator at Belong Atherton, provides more detail: "We are huge rugby fans here and I daresay we have some of the most dedicated supporters of local teams, and so for our customers, it really was a dream come true.

"A number of them are living with dementia and were engaged with Jack and Tyler from the club, talking shop and getting an insight into what the team's training looks like for Saturday's game – even our Leigh Leopards and Salford Red Devils fans came for a look, and they loved it!"

Speaking of the experience, resident Dorothy, said: "I loved meeting the boys and was so happy to see the trophies. My husband played for Tyldesley Rugby Club back in the day, and it reminded me of this time."

Resident and Salford Red Devils fan, Wilf, added: "It was lovely to chat rugby and be able to see a winner's trophy" (we're not used to seeing too many of them!).

### Getting to matches

Members of the Belong community are familiar faces at home ground The Brick Community Stadium, often supported to attend matches by the village's home care service, Belong at Home. With this game being held at Wembley Stadium, Belong Atherton instead cheered their team on in their entertainment venue with licensed bar.

Jack Corless, disability inclusion officer at Wigan Warriors Community Foundation commented: "It was a fantastic opportunity to meet Belong Atherton's customers, make their week and bring a smile to their faces. As a club, community engagement is really important to us, and we're pleased to meet with as many of our fans as possible."



Dorothy Ryan, Pretoria household resident, with her winning smile.



# In The Spotlight: Glynn Everill



Pictured: Glynn Everill

**This issue, we chat with Glynn Everill, Household Catering Lead at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme and self-professed 'foodie'.**

“Catering has always been in my family, so it’s been a passion of mine from a young age. Before Belong, I worked as a cook in a children’s hospice and this gave me a good grounding in special diets, looking after people and end-of-life care,” Glynn begins.

He joined the village as a care assistant after his incumbent role became redundant during the pandemic. Fortunately, he was able to transfer his knowledge and skills to support Belong’s residents and it wasn’t long before he was able to apply for an internal role that paired care with food.

Glynn continues: “As household catering lead, I work closely with both the kitchen and clinical teams to make sure the nutritional needs of all residents are met. For example, with the help of household colleagues, we check that individual fluid intake is at the right level.”

## Experiences expert

A typical day sees Glynn assisting with the food deliveries the households have ordered and then dropping them off to each in a shopping trolley for the teams to put away.

Helping household colleagues with food preparation is also a big part of the job. Whereas the main parts of meals are cooked by the bistro and catering team, smaller meals, side dishes and snacks are prepared in the households’ own kitchens. Glynn delights in helping get the best out of his colleagues by training them, giving them advice and ideas, for example, how to fortify meals.

Equally, residents are supported to be involved in preparing their meals, as much as they want to. “One customer is a former midwife and so her caring instinct is very strong and she loves nothing more than helping with meals,” Glynn explains. “Others might wash vegetables, polish cutlery, or set the table – whatever they would like to do, we’re happy to accommodate.”

“I started in catering and I’ve been fortunate enough to become a carer. I love that I’ve a job where the two are married together and I still get to work on the households and retain contact with the residents. And working across all households, I get to have relationships with everyone. It’s a real privilege.”

Finally, we couldn’t let Glynn go without asking what his favourite cuisine is. He reveals: “I love Indian! My auntie worked for the Red Cross and met her husband in the country. When they returned to live in the UK, he taught me how to make curry, chapatis and parathas. It’s a passion of mine, though much food eaten at home is Mediterranean as that’s what my wife Maria prefers.”



**We speak to colleagues who embody Belong’s values in their day-to-day work.**



Lisa Collier at Belong Atherton

**For this issue, Lisa Collier, Administrator at Belong Atherton, tells us what she likes most about her job and why she enjoys spending her spare time jumping out of planes.**

## What’s your favourite thing about your job?

The interaction with people. We’ve a good bunch here and there’s a lot of camaraderie.

I’ve been at the village for 11 years, having started out on reception before moving over to administration. I still get to work on reception and my role has widened to include HR, banking, purchase ledger – all the things going on in the background that make the village work. I do really enjoy the customer service element, speaking with customers and families, and it’s nice to have a break from the computer.

## Can you tell us about when you’ve helped customers?

One of our apartment tenants had a fall and pressed their personal buzzer. We called her family and for an ambulance straight away and whilst we waited, I put some pillows down and laid with her, face to face, holding her hand. I remember by the time the ambulance team arrived we were laughing and chatting. Looking back, it was really challenging but I sprang into action, and she was okay in the end.

In another example, one of the tenants was missing her late husband, so our experience coordinator, Kim and I arranged to take her out for lunch on our day off and by the end of the day she was laughing and said how grateful she was for our moral support.

## You’ve done a lot of fundraising, why are you so passionate about it?

I just love getting involved with anything I can; I guess I am a bit of an adrenaline junkie! Abseils, bungee jumps, skydives – you name it, I’ve done it.

A few years ago, a group of us here completed a half marathon for Alzheimer’s Society in Dementia Action Week. We’ve usually got a specialist exercise bike here in reception and we’ll all take turns on it to raise funds for a good cause or as part of an awareness week.

I do quite fancy doing another skydive. For the last one, I roped in my daughter (she was 16 at the time) to fall from 16,000ft, raising about £1,000 for cancer research. It was a brilliant experience.

## What do you get up to outside of work?

Socialising! I’ve two daughters and we love nothing more than a girlie film night together, either at home or at the cinema. I also really enjoy organising team nights out for us at the village.

**Lisa goes above and beyond, helping customers and colleagues every day without hesitation and always has a smile on her face. When customers need any support, she will happily take this on to make sure they are cared for. She also comes in on her days off to support events and excursions and she is a dab hand at making decorations. Her professionalism is second to none and she truly lives the Belong values.”**

- Kim Calland, experience coordinator



Pictured: Jess and Sam

# Volunteer Profile: Jess & Sam

Sam says: “We were really excited for the first day, ready to get started. I remember that everyone was very friendly, and we hoped that the residents would like us (they did!). We met Penny, the practice development facilitator and she ensured that we had the training and everything we needed to play our part.”

## Learning the ropes

Jess tells us: “We were a bit worried about how to speak to people who live with dementia, but we learned that everyone communicates differently and the more time we spent with people, we came to know them. I particularly enjoyed being able to adapt to different people, situations; it’s helped me develop my confidence.”

Despite not having any experience in care, nor any family living in a care setting, the pair have flourished, as Experience Coordinator Louise Kelly tells us: “To say these lovely ladies have made a positive impression would be an understatement. They’ve said they feel that they fit in, that they ‘belong’ – a solid quote if I ever heard one!”

“They’ve recently accepted the offer of casual contracts, so we’ll be seeing even more of them now. They have ambitions to become nurses, so we’re pleased their time with us will set them up in their care careers and who knows, maybe they’ll be back as members of our nursing team.”

**In this feature, we recognise the outstanding contributions of volunteers to the Belong community.**

Jess Hilton and Sammer ‘Sam’ Kate Ruelo have been part of the Belong Warrington team since January when they joined as part of their T Level Health college course, the vocational equivalent to A Levels. The pair chose the village to complete the required number of hours of practical experience for their qualification and give them an insight into the world of opportunities that social care has to offer.

Jess started out supporting the experience team, helping set up activities, welcome Experience Days customers and getting stuck in herself. Meanwhile, Sam began on Greenall household, building relationships with customers as another companion for them. They’ve since been helping on Whitley household, accompanying residents to breakfast club and continuing with activities.



# Noticeboard

For further details on these stories and more, from across our villages, follow us on Facebook, Instagram or X, or visit our news page on our website at: [www.belong.org.uk/news](http://www.belong.org.uk/news)

## All the fun of the fair

The past few months have seen many a summer fair hosted in the villages, with local people also welcomed to join the fun with customers and colleagues.

This year's bonanzas featured all the fun of the fair from family games and face painting, to live entertainment and the browsing of artisan gift stalls from independent traders. The sun even made a rare appearance for the occasion!

*Pictured at the villages summer fairs; (top L-R) Belong Macclesfield and Belong Chester and (bottom L-R) Belong Crewe and Belong Warrington.*



## Belong's Big Challenge

The team scaled the 517 metre-high peak of Mam Tor, walking along the famous Great Ridge and taking in breath-taking views of the surrounding countryside, with Manchester in the distance, providing the chance to forge new connections and strengthen existing relationships while spending time out in nature.

Commenting on the day, Andre Kwiatkowski, exercise specialist at Belong Macclesfield, who helped organise it, said: "It was a great day out and an opportunity to practise what we preach about the benefits of an active lifestyle, as well making memories with colleagues.

Belong CEO Martin Rix added: "I'm delighted that so many colleagues took part in Belong's Big Challenge and that everybody managed to complete it. We have some wonderful people in our organisation, and I really enjoyed spending time with them all. We're already planning our next adventure!"



*More than 40 Belong colleagues completed the hike in the scenic Peak District.*



*Pictured: Jade & Andy Shield, Becky Woodcock & Martin Rix*

## Team Warrington scale Snowdon

On Saturday 29 June 2024, a 14-strong team from Belong Warrington embarked on a walk-up Snowdon in an effort to raise money for sensory equipment, raising a very impressive £1,700!

Thank you to everyone who took part and made a donation.

Stay tuned for news on future challenges and how you can join the Belong team.



*Pictured right: The team raise the 'flag' for Belong Warrington.*

## Belong Macclesfield Carers Recognised at Royal Garden Party



*Pictured: Laura and Caylie at Buckingham Palace (L) and with their invitations (R).*

Two Macclesfield carers and their devotion to the town's older people have been recognised by King Charles III and Queen Camilla at a Garden Party hosted at Buckingham Palace.

Frontline social care workers, Laura Barsted and Caylie Jones received invitations in a mark of appreciation for their exceptional performances supporting residents and helping them to live as independently as possible.

Speaking of her experience, Laura said: "We saw both the King and the Queen up close and had the chance to enjoy the gardens. What a fantastic day!"

Caylie added: "It was a great pleasure to be acknowledged for our hard work – a once in a lifetime opportunity!"

The pair of care team leaders were selected to attend along with invitees from other not-for-profit organisations, charities and societies, as well as people put forward by the government, armed services, the Church and other faiths.



*Pictured: B RAF Cadets from 316 Leigh Squadron ATC*

## Attention!

A summer's afternoon saw RAF cadets from 316 Leigh Squadron ATC welcomed to Belong Atherton, where young guests gave a drill demonstration before a presentation of their personal stories and taking questions.

A representative said: "We were honoured to be invited to the village. It was an absolutely amazing evening and one which reminds us of our core values and ethos which is instilled into each and every one of our cadets."

## Beside the seaside

After much planning and preparation, a group from Belong Wigan's Cedar House made the 40-mile trip to the seaside for an overnight stay in Blackpool.

A stroll down the famous Golden Mile prom (prom, prom) provided the perfect backdrop for sharing happy memories of the town and the Blackpool Tower. Later, they had chance to indulge themselves with a chippy tea, followed by plenty of ice cream!



*Pictured: Resident and colleagues from Belong Wigan pictured outside Blackpool Tower.*

## Pet therapy

Canine visitors are now regular frequenters of Belong Morris Feinmann, charming residents and Experience Day customers in monthly pet therapy sessions.



*Pictured: Palm Household resident, Henry.*

*Pictured: Owner, Anne Walsh, with Jeff the labrador and Experience Day customer, Carol.*



# #Join us

We are pleased to invite the Belong community to join us on Instagram to keep up to date with life in the villages and with the Belong at Home teams.

Keep us posted with what you get up to by tagging us in your pictures and videos (just remember to get permission before you capture other people in your happy moments!).



Follow us by searching @belongvillages on your Instagram account or scan the QR code with your smartphone or tablet for direct access to our page – see you there!



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