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NORTH WALES SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

Caring in Wrexham

Community Micro-Enterprises

Learning from innovation

An assessment of the impact of Community Catalysts

November 2022

Contact us

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Summary

Between 1st April 2021 – 30th September 2022;

- A total of **53** Micro Enterprises had been established with a total of **61** jobs created
- **248** individuals received care from a micro enterprise.
- **50%** of individuals received personal care services
- **55%** of community-micro enterprises offered other flexible support enabling people to live independently at home and engage with their local community
- In September, **842** hours of personal care were delivered by micro enterprises every week in Wrexham

Between 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022;

- **26%** of all customers who received Direct Payments from WCBC chose to spend their money on support from a community micro-enterprise
- **39%** of the total income made by community micro-enterprises in Wrexham was paid by Direct Payment
- **35%** of total Direct Payments were spent on micro enterprise support.
- Micro enterprises made up **5%** of commissioned home care in Wrexham
- **100%** of individuals supported by a micro enterprise feel the same or better about the person who supports them, compared with other carers in receipt of Direct Payments

In 2022/23 An estimated **£500,000** will be spent on care provided by micro enterprises in Wrexham.

Introduction

Community Catalysts are a social enterprise working across Wales and the UK to help expand the offer of care and support to individuals to live independently at home and within their local communities. It has been jointly commissioned by Wrexham County Borough Council and the Health Board to support people to set up as 'micro-enterprises', small businesses ranging from sole traders up to businesses employing eight people who offer flexible and personalised care and support services to older people, people living with disabilities, people experiencing poor mental health and carers. The services offered are intended to enhance the existing care offer by the local authority, independent providers and third sector.

There is a need to develop new and innovative ways of delivering care and support to meet increasing care needs of the population living at home, particularly in rural areas where demand for services is high. The social care market is facing significant challenges in recruitment leading to a long wait for individuals who need care at home. Community Catalysts have been commissioned to help build resilient community marketplaces, as well as offering individuals the ability to maintain wellbeing and access to their community and peers; reducing the demand on Wrexham's domiciliary and residential care services.

Methods

This report has been undertaken by the Research Innovation Coordination (RIC) Hub, a team of specialists working to coordinate and review evidence based integrated health and social care research in North Wales. The team support evaluation of projects funded by Regional Integration Fund (formerly the Integrated Care Fund). Health and social care representatives from Community Catalysts and Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) met with the RIC Hub to discuss the scope and purpose of the report and agreed three key questions;

- How much progress has been made in achieving the intended outcomes?
- Are there any unintended impacts?
- What has been learned along the way?

The RIC Hub have carried out the exercise using the following tools and guidance;

- [Social Value UK Principles](#)
- Results Based Accountability

- [The PERCCI Person Centred Care Inventory](#)
- [Developing Evidence Enriched Practice \(DEEP\)](#) storytelling methods

The assessment was made by reviewing;

- qualitative and quantitative evidence submitted by Community Catalysts and WCBC
- Qualitative data from a storytelling workshop with micro enterprises
- Attendance at two networking groups (face to face in Chirk and Wrexham)
- Attendance at one online networking group.
- Results of an independent RIC Hub survey sent to individuals in receipt of Direct Payments

Background

About Community Catalysts

Community Catalysts helps people find ways to approach health and care that put people before systems. They offer accessible, engaging learning opportunities for health and care practitioners and people who use health or care services. Their personal development programmes have a strong focus on people's strengths, building on what works well. They help people to use their talents to start and run small enterprises and community businesses that support and care for other local people. This helps;

- create local jobs and keep local money local
- people to live a good life, connected with and contributing to their community
- local organisations to create the conditions in which people can follow their dreams

The aim is to encourage people to become community micro-enterprises who are:

- maybe interested in providing social care services to older people but may have no experience
- currently working in the care sector but interested in being their own boss
- actively supporting people in their local communities
- wanting to do something that support others and makes a difference

A Local Catalyst is employed to work across Wrexham to identify and work with potential enterprises to;

- support them to develop their business or idea

- provide information on training, funding and other available support and resources
- support individuals to develop and deliver a quality service in line with current Welsh Government legislation and regulations
- provide links to a network of other community micro-care providers for mutual support

Examples of care and support offered include;

- Personal Care
- Cleaning
- Gardening
- Laundry
- Shopping
- Community transport
- Befriending service
- Food preparation

Why are they important?

It is recognised nationally that carers are underpaid which contributes to the workforce recruitment and retention challenges within the sector. This is having a direct impact on availability of care (Market Stability Report 2022).

There are significant shortfalls in all areas of support for people to live at home in Wrexham. Someone who needs personal care for the first time may be put on a waiting list. Recently waiting times have increased and in some areas of North Wales this has resulted in individuals requiring a stay in a residential care home. (Market Stability Report 2022).

The number of people aged over 65 is growing and this age group are more likely to require services. In Wrexham the number of people receiving services has decreased. This may be due in part to unmet need, because there is a lack of service capacity or unidentified needs (Population Needs Assessment 2022).

The number of people requiring community support services is expected to continue to increase in Wrexham based on age and those who require support with activities of daily living. (Population Needs Assessment 2022).

Wrexham's Improvement Priorities 2020-2023

Community Catalysts work contributes directly to Wrexham's Council Plan Improvement priorities 2020 – 2023; to develop and decarbonise the environment; develop the economy and promote good health and wellbeing.

Promote local entrepreneurship – community micro-enterprises are entrepreneurs delivering services within their local communities. Businesses are being supported to locate and grow in Wrexham by Community Catalysts, attracting new people into the care workforce.

Reduce carbon emissions attributed to services - Community micro enterprises are developed in areas where care is needed most, delivered by local residents. Reduced distance travelled between home visits helps to reduce carbon emissions.

Increase activity in relation to good health and wellbeing prevention and early help services – individuals are being supported to live active, independent lives within their community.

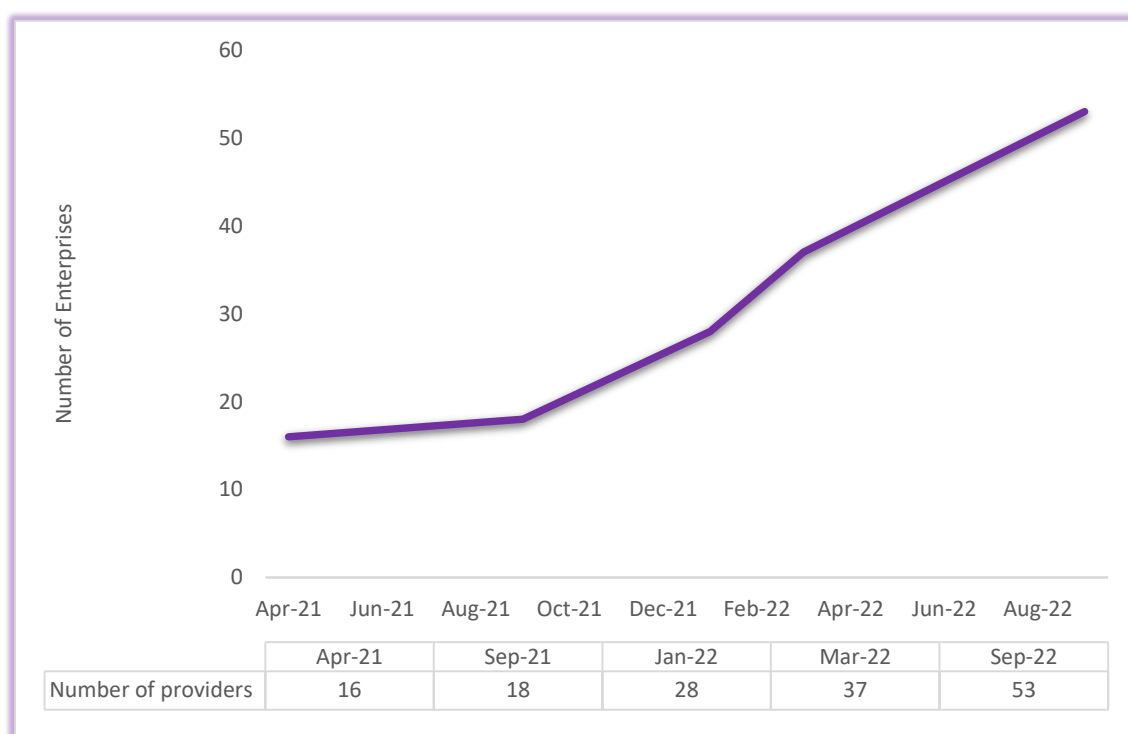
Increase care capacity – half of all community micro-enterprises offer personal care services.

How much?

Progress in numbers

The charts below demonstrate the progress made in the eighteen months Community Catalysts have worked in Wrexham (April 2021 – September 2022).

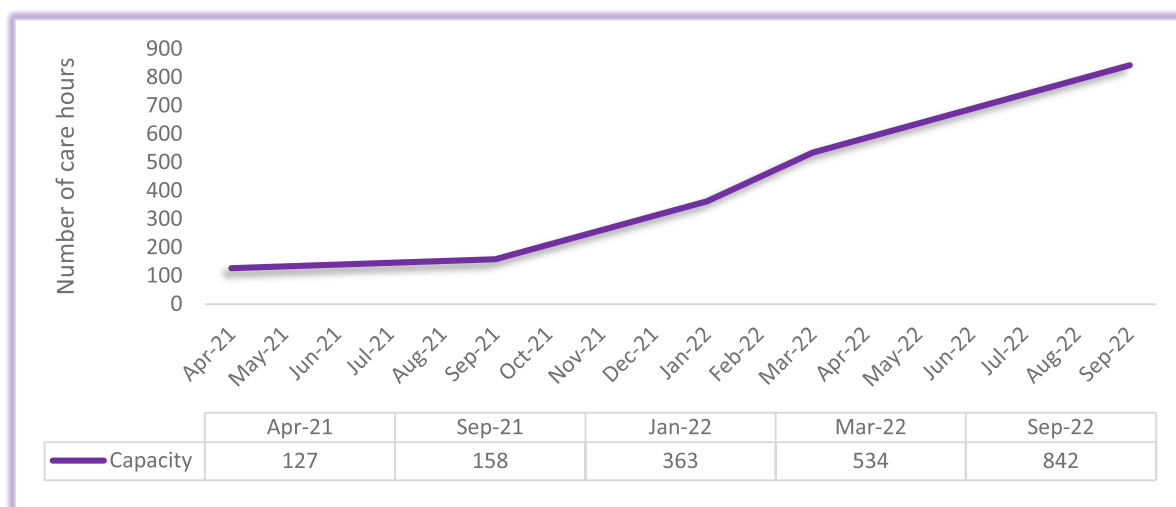
Chart 1: Number of community micro enterprises established



Source: 2021/22 Change Group Reports (Community Catalysts) This figure excludes enterprises who were yet to launch (13); complete the 'Doing it Right' Standards' or have ceased to operate (4).

Observation at meetings and feedback from enterprises suggest the Local Catalyst is able to provide a high quality of support to a small number of individuals to set up an enterprise. A total of 53 people have set up community micro enterprises. The chart above demonstrates the care offer in Wrexham is growing at a stable rate and suggests the pipeline of new enterprises is well planned and carefully managed.

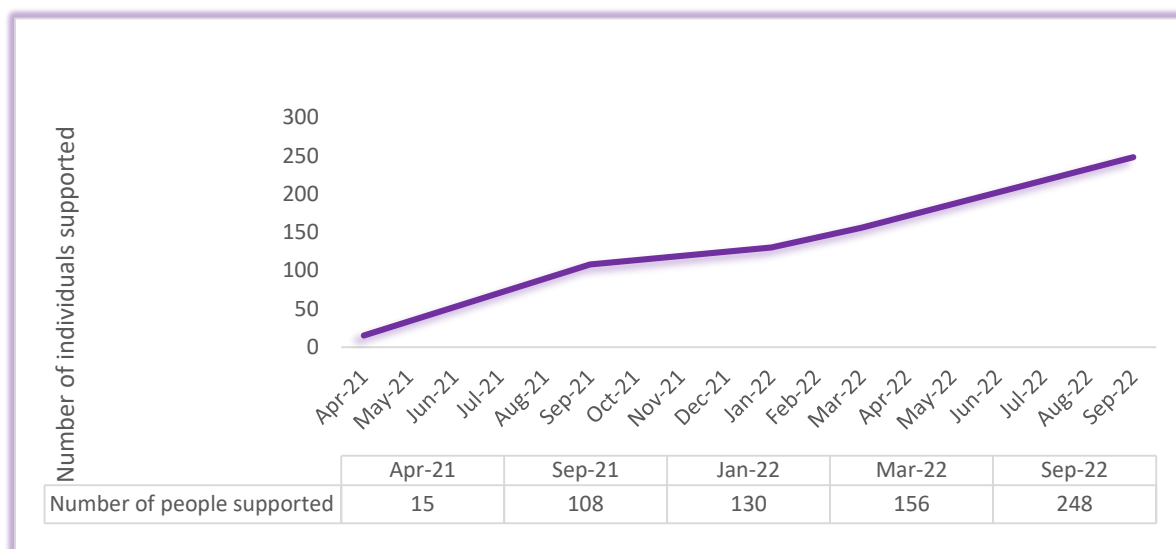
Chart 2: Number of hours of care and support provided by community micro-enterprises



Source: 2021/22 Change Group Reports (Community Catalysts)

Chart 2 shows the number of support hours provided by enterprises is steadily increasing. The rate of growth is closely aligned to the number of enterprises (Chart 1). This suggests that, once established, enterprises are finding individuals who require support and are actively supporting people within their community without delay.

Chart 3 Number of clients who employ a community micro enterprise to help them live independently.



Source: 2021/22 Change Group Reports (Community Catalysts)

By 30th September 2022, a total of 248 individuals were receiving support at home from community micro enterprises in Wrexham, half of those were receiving personal care. The work of community micro-enterprises directly supports WCBC to meet the increasing demand to support people to live independently at home.

Progress is well paced, stable and consistent across all key performance indicators. It is reassuring that the growth of micro enterprises is steady and sustained, reducing the risk of unintended sudden impacts on the local social care market.

How Well?

Direct Payments

Direct Payments are a way for people to pay for support to meet their personal and social needs. Instead of this support being provided by social services, the person is given the money and they decide on the services that will meet their needs. This can give the person greater control over who will help them and in what way the help is provided.

Direct Payments are a key factor in the growth of community micro enterprises with 35% of all Direct Payments paid to community micro enterprises in 2021/22. Annual Direct Payment statistics from WCBC show that micro enterprises provided care to the financial value of **£121,119** during 2021/22

As care provided is not commissioned directly by the council, there was a positive unintended impact to community micro enterprises entering the market. Community micro enterprises focus on their own local area, they do not travel as far and so save time and money on travel and have lower overheads. As a result they charge £4.20 less than the average domiciliary care provider.

The table below shows an annual direct cost saving of £58,812 during the year.

Table 1: Calculation of cost savings through use of Direct Payments v commissioned care charges for older people.

Reporting period	No hours per week	Commissioned Charge	CME Charge	Total savings per quarter
Quarter 1	127	£2519	£2049	£5640
Quarter 2	158	£3212	£2549	£7956
Quarter 3	363	£7380	£5855	£18,300
Quarter 4	534	£10856	£8613.42	£26,916
Total	-	-	-	£58,812

**Calculated using the average rate paid by the WCBC for older people's personal care (£20.33) **Calculated using the agreed fair rate for micro enterprises (CME) through Direct Payments (£16.13)*

Managing Change

The Change Group meet every three months to monitor progress and discuss areas of positive progress and reflect on risks, issues and challenges. Representatives from WCBC including the Direct Payments team, Community Catalysts Regional Manager and the local community catalysts attend. Micro enterprises are also periodically invited to attend meetings to share their experiences and reflect on their journey so far. Detailed Change Group reports are issued prior to the meeting including performance indicators, achievements, challenges and activities undertaken. There is a strong focus on performance and reflection and evidence of continuous improvement, these are positive meetings where a collaborative approach is taken to resolve problems.

Social care providers in North Wales say that recognising and paying the true cost of care is a top priority for them (Market Stability Report 2022). Pay is recognised as a national issue impacting on the care workforce. The Council and Community Catalysts worked collaboratively to agree a fair rate of pay. Community Catalysts have shared this learning

Negotiating a fair rate of pay for community micro enterprises

In supporting community micro enterprises to set up, the Local Catalyst was asked 'How much should I charge?'. As a sole trader, enterprises have the autonomy to set their own hourly rate. In the beginning, community micro enterprises charged different rates. Through partnership work with WCBC, Community Catalysts found that the Direct Payment rate in Wrexham is £12.95 per hour for Personal Assistants who are usually employed by the person needing care and support. This rate did not reflect the higher costs involved in running an enterprise such as insurances, equipment, travel, training and holiday pay.

Community Catalysts carried out market research, engaged with WCBC and community micro-enterprises and in partnership a rate of £16.13 was agreed as a fair rate by Wrexham Council. Community micro-enterprises emphasised how useful the advice was in deciding how much to charge for their services.

Community Catalysts run a Shared Learning Network for all commissioners. Direct payment arrangements were identified by group members as a barrier to developing community micro enterprises. Collaborative working with Wrexham through the Change Group has reduced these barriers and contributed to the success of the project.

Local Catalyst Activities

Recruitment

Community Catalysts has a strong online presence locally, through advertising and promotion on other websites as well as their own social media accounts including a [Facebook](#) page with regular posts and interactions.

Change Group reports provide details of stakeholder engagement and a record of the number of entrepreneurs recruited through networking meetings. The stakeholders were contacted to discuss collaboration, referrals, advice and support for potential enterprises. Over one hundred stakeholder engagement meetings took place during the year.

Promotional videos

Community Catalysts has produced several promotional videos to recruit potential enterprises and share learning.

[Moya](#) talks about setting up an enterprise to offer help at home to older and disabled people.

[Dawn and Seema](#) talk about their experience of providing and receiving support and the things they enjoy doing together

[Steve Latham White](#), Commissioning Officer at Wrexham Council shares his learning from working with Community Catalysts and reflects on what has worked well and why in Wrexham.

Stakeholder communication

Through the Change Group meetings discussions about risks, issues and challenges a number of actions were agreed including developing Frequently Asked Questions for Social Workers who were referring individuals needing care and support directly to community micro enterprises.

Networking Peer Support Groups

Community Catalysts facilitate networking peer support groups on a local basis, with face to face meetings held in Chirk and Wrexham town centre each month. There is a strong sense of community at these meetings. Despite community micro enterprises busy schedules the meetings are well attended. It is an opportunity to discuss challenges, issues and celebrate and reflect on achievements. New enterprises learn from those who are already established. Group members were observed offering each other support and advice to sustain their businesses on issues including;

- Scheduling visits, route planning and working locally to minimise costs and time spent travelling
- Increasing capacity steadily to avoid burnout
- Updating peers on services they offer
- Potential referrals to other community micro enterprises
- Using contracts to manage issues

Supporting Community Micro Enterprises

Support offered by the Local Catalyst includes;

- Coaching and support
- Guidance on setting up a business
- HMRC and insurance requirements
- Direct Payments
- Marketing hints and tips
- Free advertising on the [Small Good Stuff](#) directory
- A networking and peer support community with other micro enterprises
- Signposting to other sources of business support locally
- Contract guidance
- 'Doing it Right' standards

Doing it Right Standards

Micro enterprises are sole traders; they do not fit the regulatory framework of Care Inspectorate Wales. To ensure that micro enterprises are supported to provide quality care, the Local Catalyst coaches micro enterprises in the '[Doing it Right Standards](#)' and supports community micro enterprises to meet the standards. Community micro enterprises can sign up to these standards voluntarily. The standards cover;

- Responsibilities and expectations of a community micro enterprise
- what services can/should be offered
- service design and planning
- business and personal conduct
- person centred care
- Commitment to reflect, learn and improve

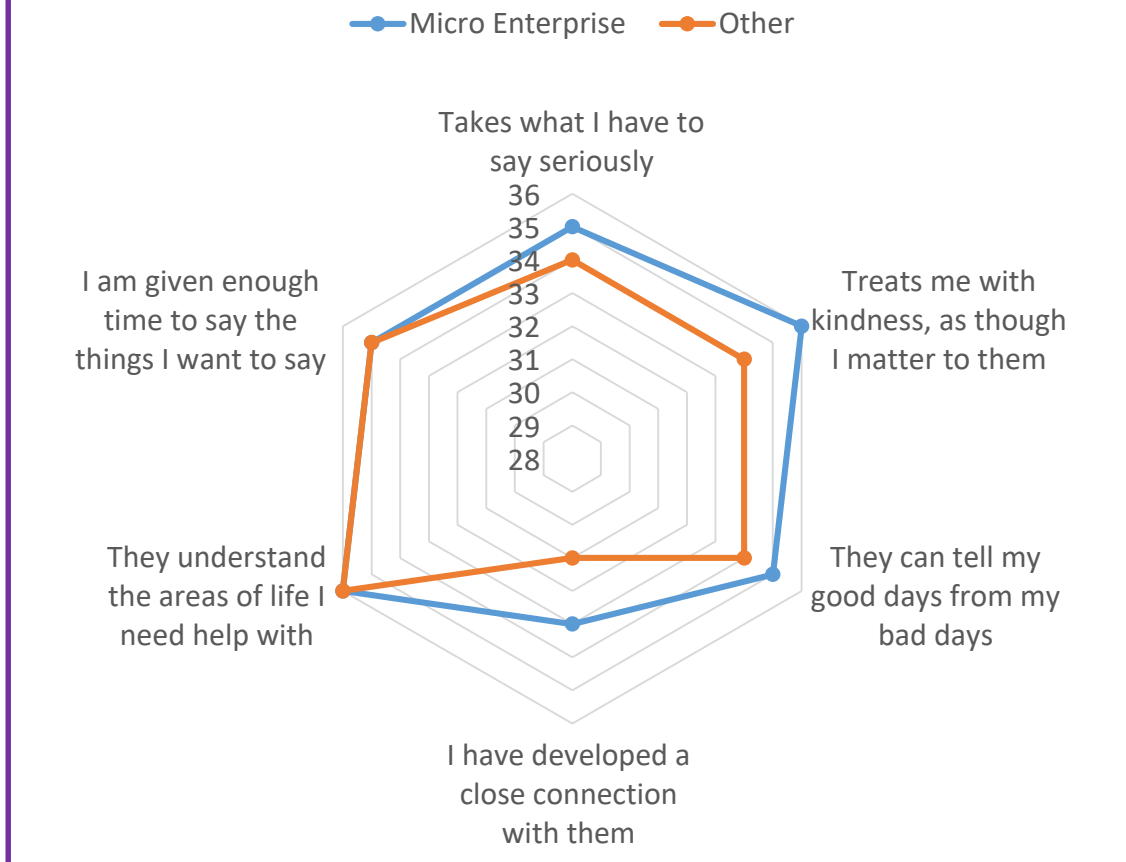
Have we made a difference?

What impact have community micro enterprises had on the individuals being cared for?

An independent survey was undertaken by the RIC Hub in July 2022 (Appendix 1) of individuals receiving Direct Payments. Thirteen people responded who were supported by a community micro enterprise.

The [Person Centred Community Care Inventory \(PERCCI\)](#), developed by the University of York, is a short, easy-to-complete questionnaire that measures the quality of care experiences. It is an evidence-based tool, co-designed with people with lived experience of care services. Respondents were asked to rate six statements about how they feel about the people or person who supports them, and six statements about their care overall. Possible answers were Never or rarely, Sometimes, Often or Always. A score is calculated for each answer and provides a baseline and indication of whether care provided is person centred.

How do individuals feel about the people or person who support them?



Source: Direct Payment PERCCI tool scores July 2022. Notes: a) 'Other' includes Personal Assistants and other care providers who receive Direct Payments b) 'Other' close family members and partners of the individual receiving care were excluded from the sample group.

The diagram above indicates that individuals in receipt of Direct Payment are receiving a high standard of person centred support. Those supported by a community micro enterprise scored slightly higher in all questions about how they feel about the individual supporting them.

Case Studies

Many stories have been shared by individuals receiving care and those providing the support. The below case study explores the positive impact of timely and flexible support to live independently at home after a stay at hospital.

Mr B's story - Part 1: A helping hand

“Mr B is 83 years old, until recently had been living independently without support. He likes to grow vegetables in the garden, his weekly routine includes driving to the shops and visiting a friend.

After a recent stay in hospital Mr B was unable to cook, do housework, and he needed support with his medication. I also helped to maintain his garden during this time.

As his health improved, Mr B confided in me that the last time he went shopping he had a fall and cut his face. He was worried this would happen again. I offered to go shopping together, and we did this a few of times. I drove him initially and he was unsteady on his feet, but he said he felt more confident with me there, holding onto me at first. With a helping hand he was able to get used to being outside again and he gained confidence to go out alone and is working towards getting back to his old routine.”

Part 2 – An unexpected find!

“During one of our shopping trips Mr B purchased some very old, second-hand china. He told me his wife had a shop a long time ago, and he was absolutely thrilled to have found part of a set. It sits on the table top next to him to admire.

Mr B began to research the name of the pattern. Whilst recovering from his hospital stay spending more time indoors, it became his passion and his focus. With the help of the Local Catalyst I have managed to source a tablet that Mr B can use. Through this find, he has also been introduced to the world of technology.

It's lovely to see the enthusiasm and excitement on his face as this adventure unfolds. Having phone contact with lots of people means he is no longer just sitting watching TV daily, the research is opening up some new social contacts”.

What impact have Community Catalysts had on community micro enterprises?

Community Catalysts carried out a survey of 39 people the Local Catalyst supported. Respondents were asked to rate the Local Catalyst's contribution to development of their enterprise on a scale of 1 -10 (1 being the least contribution and 10 being the most). The average score was 9.5. A full copy of the report is included in the appendices (Appendix 2).

“I was put in touch with the Local Catalyst who I liked and felt comfortable with immediately. He explained the process of becoming self-employed and the standards required. We then arranged a series of meetings and my six-week journey began. Along the way, he was an outstanding communicator, clearly had an abundance of knowledge and supported me all the way. The Local Catalyst continues to give amazing support both individually and as part of the Wrexham Community Micro Enterprises Group that has been set up on Whatsapp and by arranging get togethers locally too. We gain experience, share tips and ideas and have a laugh. Although self-employed we are all valued members of a wider community group which is invaluable”

Sandra, Kind Hands (community micro-enterprise)

In the Glyn Ceiriog Valley, a rural area with an older population a domiciliary care provider ceased trading, which had an immediate impact on those requiring support. The Local Catalyst was able to target resources to develop community-micro enterprises within the community. A Glyn Ceiriog residents discusses the success of the project;

“Community Catalysts, especially the Local Catalyst, has made a huge difference to the Wrexham area. In my Valley there is no support from care agencies. Older people were facing going into residential care when they could remain in their own homes. The Local Catalyst has helped at least 12 people become self-employed as carers. There are now at approximately 15 people living independently in their own homes in our community. Throughout the Borough, there must be more than 50 new enterprises, thanks to the Local Catalyst, all helping many more people remain in their own homes”

Have the outcomes set out in the contract been achieved?

Outcome 1: The domiciliary care market in Wrexham is sustainable, outcome-focused and able to deliver what matters to the people of Wrexham;

- Micro enterprises now make up 5% of the domiciliary care market in Wrexham this demonstrates an increased care offer, with more choice and more individuals taking control of their own care through Direct Payment.
- The volume and rate of progress shown in key performance indicators underpinned by substantial qualitative evidence provided by Community Catalysts gives assurance that individuals feel positive about their care and the offer is sustainable for micro enterprises to deliver.
- The independent survey gave an assurance of the quality of care, though this was a small survey. Now that the enterprises have a stake in the care market, as a next step the Council may wish to consider how ongoing monitoring of care quality is measured and how this will be reported.

Outcome 2: People are supported to live active, independent lives within their community;

- Qualitative evidence from observation at networking groups, case studies, workshops and the independent survey provide evidence of the diverse types of care and support being provided.
- The PERCCI scores suggest a good standard of person centred care is delivered to individuals.