

LINKAGE PLUS PROJECT

VILLAGE AGENTS GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL in partnership with GLOUCESTERSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

FIRST INTERIM REPORT ALISON CROW AND LYNNE WILSON INLOGOV, SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

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A. INTRODUCTION

Under the conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding, Gloucestershire County Council in partnership with the Gloucester Rural Community Council, has successfully set up the Village Agent Project Pilot which covers over 95 parishes in some of the most isolated areas of the county. 30 village agents work within clusters (referred to individual parish clusters) of communities which have limited or no access to services locally. These individual parish clusters are within North and South Cotswolds, Stroud, Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury. Each individual parish cluster contains a 50+ population of between 331 and 1125 people.

Gloucestershire Rural Community Council with support from Gloucestershire County Council have commenced an ongoing training programme with village agents with the overall aim of the village agent pilot providing high quality information to promote access to a wide range of services, while successfully working alongside statutory and voluntary organisations to build up knowledge based information based on questions frequently asked in connection with customer need. The ongoing training of village agents will also include training relating to accessing information and spreading appropriate services within communities.

It is recognised that Gloucestershire County Council has a number of existing initiatives already in place for the pilot to develop. It is hoped that the pilot will develop a multi-agency contact centre approach started by CAREdirect and increase information around service provision started by the Customer Access initiative. The project will test the hypothesis that rural communities prefer to access someone they know within their community for help and advice.

1. Outcomes and Success Criteria for the Project

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and depending on initial baseline levels a 5 – 25% level of improvement is expected in the overall satisfaction levels for older people over the life span of the project.

The success criteria is based on 4 Outcomes:

- Outcome 1. Older Adults in Gloucestershire villages and particularly those who are older, frail and vulnerable, feel more secure, feel more cared for, and thus have a better quality of life.
- Outcome 2 Older adults will have easy access to a wide range of information, which will enable them to make informed decisions about their own well-being.
- Outcome 3. Older adults will be in receipt of any services or assistance that can help them remain independent in their own homes and enable them to feel part of a supportive enabling community.
- Outcome 4. Older adults will be engaged to enable them to influence both development of the Village Agent role and future service provision in their area.

In order to reach these outcomes the Memorandum of Understanding has set Success Criteria targets to be reached during the monitoring period:

- Success Criteria target of 1% increase in benefit applications by June 2007.
- Success Criteria target of 1% increase in referrals to energy schemes by June 2007.
- By June 2007 each Village Agent should have been promoting volunteering, liaising with an existing Time Banking Scheme or other voluntary organisations and as a result 20 volunteers should have been matched with appropriate opportunities.
- Success Criteria of 1500 village agents contacts for each three month period from April 2007 to June 2008.
- Success Criteria of 500 village agent contacts to Adult Helpdesk for each three month period from April 2007 to June 2008.

- Success Criteria that “once operational, village agents will run a minimum of one surgery, meet with one local statutory or voluntary group, or visit four people in their own homes per week or complete other tasks as required by their role in their locality as part of their outreach services”.

This first report will be the first of three interim monitoring reports. The report will analyse the first round of data received from the Standardised Enquiry Form (Gateways), the Adult Service Help Desk statistics, best practice diaries and case studies. The report will also comment on the research going to take place up to the second interim report.

2. Meeting the Success Criteria: A Summary

- Success Criteria target of 1% increase in benefit applications by June 2007.
- Success Criteria target of 1% increase in referrals to energy schemes by June 2007.

There were no baseline figures for benefit applications and referrals to energy schemes included in the Baseline Report. The Maiden data can give baseline figures for individual parish clusters and types of benefit application, such as incapacity benefit, carer claimants, disabled claimants, but it does not break these figures down by age so it is impossible to identify baseline figures for those 50 or over applying for benefits. There is some data regarding benefits and energy scheme enquiries available via Gateways. When comparing the data up to June 2007 to that up to April 2007 (see Baseline Report) both benefits and energy were in the top ten list of topics for up to April 2007 but energy was in seventh place and has moved up to sixth; benefits in the form of assessments for the DWP has remained in fourth place. Queries about benefits and energy have almost doubled over the intervening two months. It is hoped the case studies will also produce cases relating to affordable warmth.

- By June 2007 each Village Agent should have been promoting volunteering, liaising with an existing Time Banking Scheme or other voluntary organisations and as a result 20 volunteers should have been matched with appropriate opportunities.

There have been 22 returned Gateways relating to volunteering so this will be measured over the forthcoming months. There are a number of examples of good practice in relation to volunteering in the Gloucestershire area. Three such examples are:

- Time Bank in North Cotswolds
- Minibus scheme to take people shopping being developed in North Cotswolds
- Links with Tesco for discount (£5) for internet shopping

- Success Criteria of 1500 village agents contacts for each three month period from April 2007 to June 2008.

The target for April 2007 to June 2007 has been more than exceeded with the total number of contacts amounting to 4344 and the total number of meetings reaching 744.

- Success Criteria of 500 village agent contacts to Adult Helpdesk for each three month period from April 2007 to June 2008.

The data for the adult helpdesk, however, reveals that the target cannot be achieved and the Project Manager for the Gloucestershire pilot said the target was 'unrealistic'. However, when comparing the number of contacts to the Adult Helpdesk in April, May and June 2006 and comparing those figures to April, May and June 2007, there has been an increase in contacts of 33% 100% and 105% respectively. This produces an average of 79%.

- Success Criteria that "once operational, village agents will run a minimum of one surgery, meet with one local statutory or voluntary group, or visit four people in their own homes per week or complete other tasks as required by their role in their locality as part of their outreach services".

The target for April 2007 to June 2007 has been more than exceeded with the total number of contacts amounting to 4344 and the total number of meetings reaching 744.

One final measure of the successful impact village agents have had on their local communities comes from the Fire Service. From June 2006 to June 2007, the Fire Service fitted 2,000 smoke alarms: between December and June 2007, there were 60 village agent requests for smoke alarms. This has produced an increase of 6% since the village agents became operational.

3. Changes and Revisions Since the Baseline Report.

1. Changes to the individual parish clusters. The Project Manager for LinkAge at Gloucestershire County Council outlined the reasons for these changes:

In April 2007, 4 months after the first phase of Agents had begun working, the number and spread of parishes was reviewed.

- Initially some Agents had found that they had several referrals and were kept busy with visiting and helping people.
- In some communities it was proving harder to network and make sure people were aware of the service available.
- In the parishes with smaller communities there are a finite number of people that need help from the Agent and once the service is well known the rate of referrals may decrease.
- Some parishes were now requesting a Village Agent once they had heard about the service.
- One parish, who had initially refused a Village Agent, was now requesting one.
- Two Agents resigned allowing the opportunity to rethink where they were placed.

Consequently the number of parishes was increased to 141, mostly by adding new parishes onto existing patches. A new cluster was created and some amalgamated following a request for an Agent from one village in the Forest of Dean area. This was done in consultation with the Agents, who were by now familiar with their areas, and also in consultation with the parish councils concerned.

2. During the final week of completing the Baseline Report, the Maiden data was made available to the local evaluators for each individual parish cluster. As there was no time to explore and analyse the data, it was placed as an appendix in the report, with the aim of using the information where applicable in the three interim reports, the Monitoring and Evaluation Draft Report and

the Final Report. Whilst compiling this report, however, it has become apparent that the Maiden data, though useful, may not provide the information required for the project at this stage. It could, however, prove useful when analysing case study and focus group material in later reports.

2. The second questionnaire planned for September 2007 and outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding will be substituted with best practice diaries and case study reports (see appendix III for case study identification form). Diaries and case studies will be analysed December to February 2008.

3. The second round of focus groups will be analysed in February and March 2008. The focus groups will be organised by village agents and will take place with voluntary and statutory bodies. See appendix IV for a framework for these focus groups.

4. The second satisfaction survey will be distributed by village agents in March and April 2008 and results will be analysed in May and June 2008.

B. MONITORING SECTION

1. Analysis of Data from Standardised Enquiry Form:

The Village Agent project uses a standardised enquiry form (Gateway – see Appendix I) to monitor the queries received. The form has been designed to identify monitoring information such as the demographic characteristics of people accessing the service, how and where they make contact, and the resulting actions. The data and information presented below is based on monitoring information for December 2006 to June 2007.

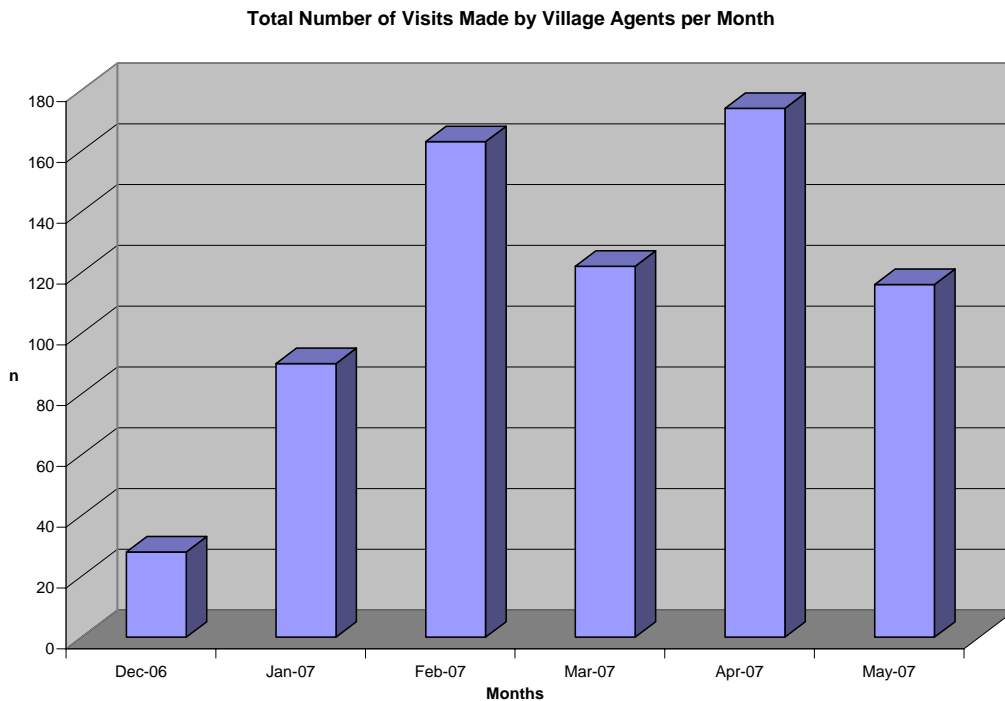
In most cases the data is presented as it is supplied by the Project Manager as frequencies rather than as percentages. Percentages have been mostly avoided as the small sample sizes could lead to misleading and exaggerating trends and patterns. It is instead presented as frequencies: the actual number of individual cases.

Number of Visits Made by Village Agents

The overall evaluation forms for each month, starting from December 2006, reveal a big increase in the number of visits made by village agents between the months December 2006 and February 2007 (see graph 1). The rise in visits during this period is fairly dramatic as would be expected as the project had just started and the first group of village agents were still new to the role.

This explains why the total number of visits for December, 28, is so low. Between December and January the total number of visits increases by 66, and between January and February the increase is 73. The second group of village agents were appointed in January and the number of visits increases along with the number of village agents. There is a slight dip in the number of visits in March, down to 122, before it reaches the highest level it has been so far, 174 visits, in April 2007, and then declining by around a third in May 2007. Given that all the village agents were operational in May it is interesting that there is a noticeable decline in visits for that month. A continued increase or a slight variation up or down on the previous month would perhaps have been expected.

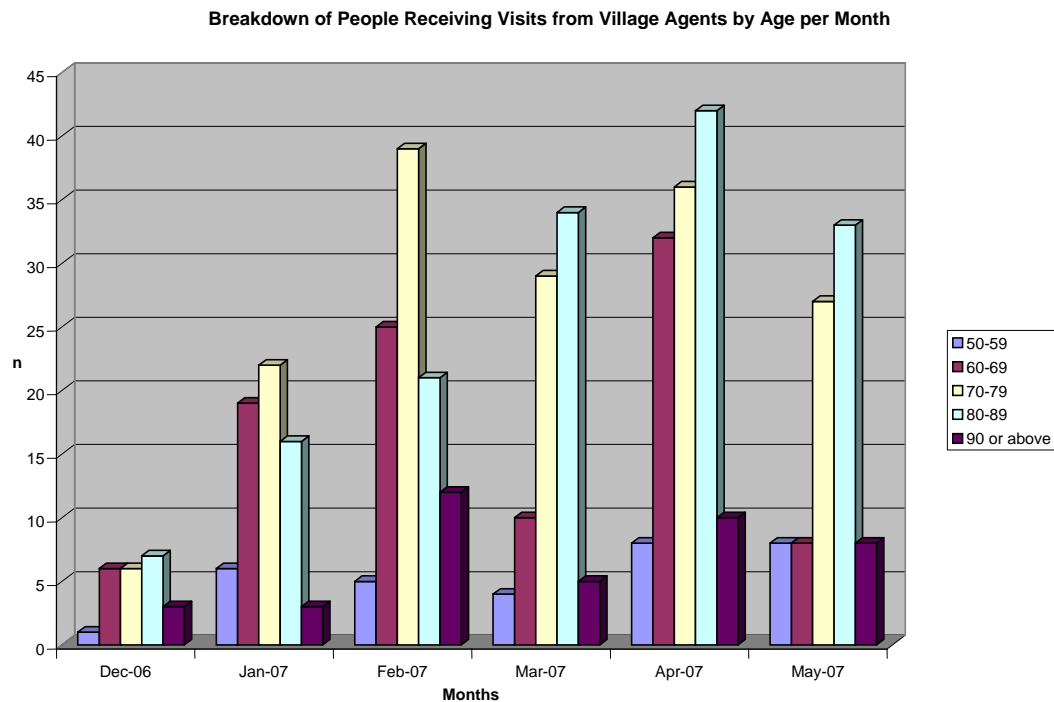
Graph 1



People Receiving Visits from Village Agents by Age

Following the broad patterns identified in the overall visits made by village agents in graph 1, the breakdown of people by age who receive visits by village agents, has low numbers of visits for all age groups for December with an increase in January and February (see graph 2). For four out of the six months, there is one age group which receives more visits than any other, the 80-89 age group. For the two months where this group does not receive the most visits, it is the 70-79 age group which does. A possible explanation for this is that younger age groups may be more mobile and independent so they could be working, enjoying social events and/or meeting friends. The younger age groups may also feel more confident to tackle issues themselves with the organisation/person(s) concerned without feeling the need to contact a village agent.

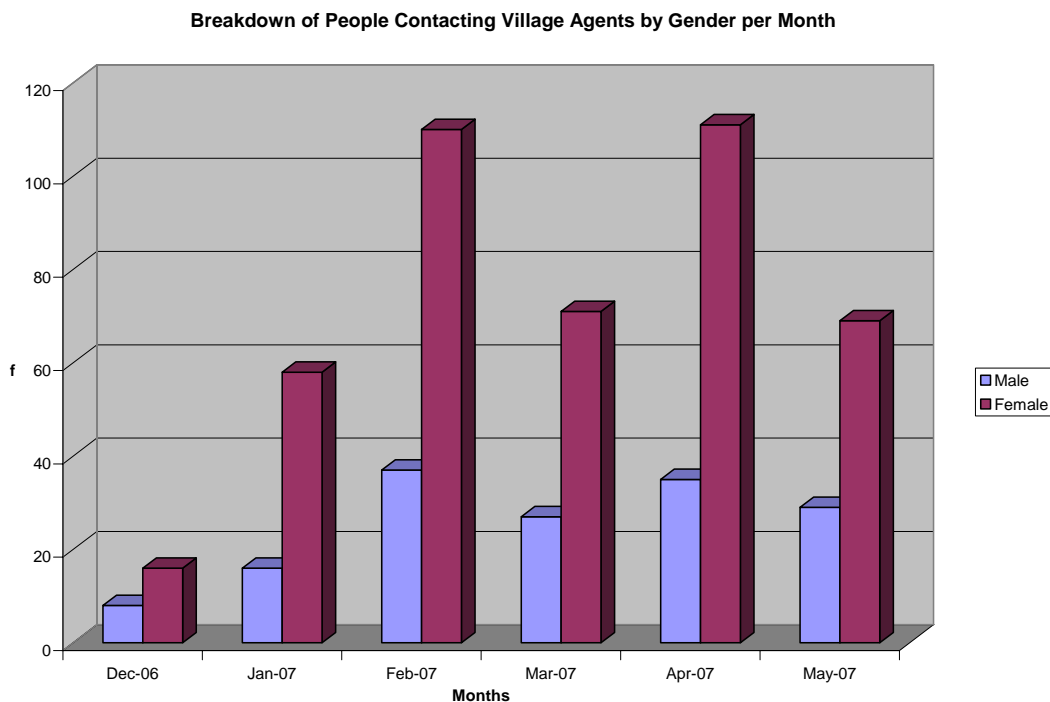
Graph 2



People Contacting Village Agents by Gender

When exploring who is contacting village agents, the graph below (graph 3) reveals that many more women aged 50 or above contact village agents than men for every month data has been recorded and collected. As would be expected the fluctuations and trends for each month follow the pattern for the overall levels of contact with January and February showing a marked increase and March and May indicating a decline.

Graph 3



Graph 3 reveals that for December 2006 and for May 2007 there were only twice as many women contacting village agents as men but for February, March and April there are approximately three times as many. For January the ratio is even higher as there are four times as many women contacting village agents than men. Possible reasons for the overall difference between men and women contacting village agents may be down to women being more likely to ask for help than men; there may be more women in the area than men due to natural wastage (particularly amongst the older age groups); they are more likely to attend social activities where the village agents have left information or have given talks; and they may be more likely to chat with others when they are out and about and find out about the service that way. For married couples it may also be the woman who is more likely to phone or ask for help than the man even though both will benefit from the service.

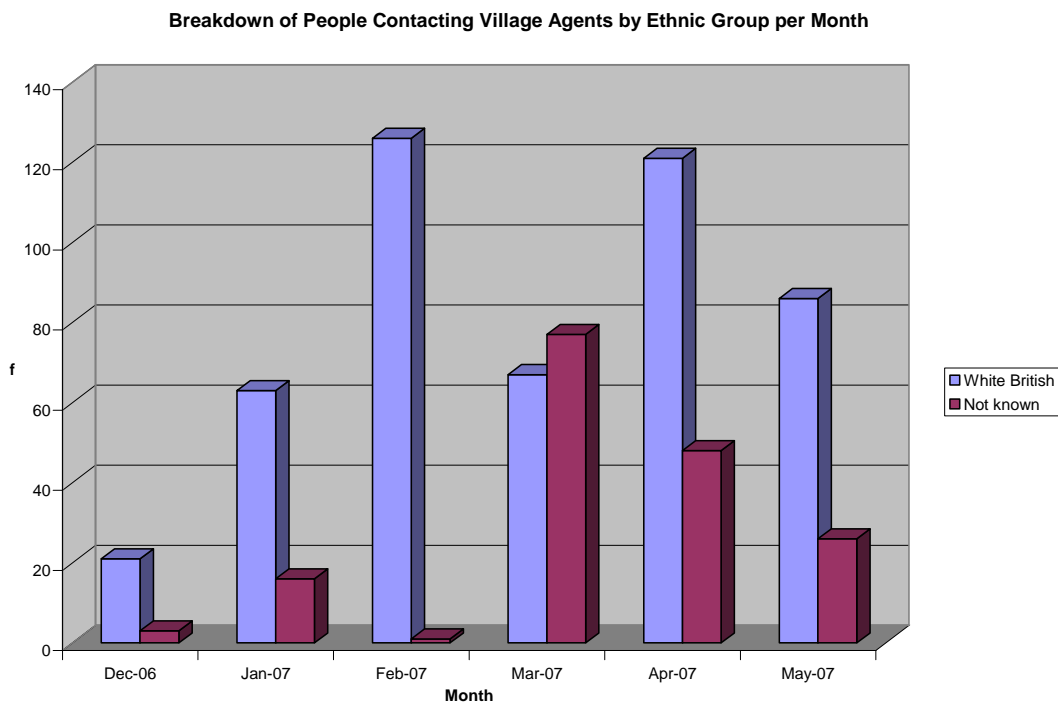
There are also more female village agents than male: 21 women to 7 men, so perhaps this has a bearing on men's reluctance to contact village agents.

Unfortunately the data from Maiden does not have a socio-demographic breakdown for the parish clusters so it is impossible to describe or give examples of the gender profile of any of the individual parish clusters.

People Contacting Village Agents by Ethnic Group

The graph illustrating which types of ethnic group contact village agents reveals that there are only two ethnic groups identified: 'white British' and 'not known' (see graph 4). The ethnic grouping 'not known' does not necessarily mean contacts made by ethnic groups other than 'white British'. What 'unknown' is representative of is contacts not being asked at the time of contact, which ethnic grouping they identified with. What can be said is the data follows the broad overall trends for contacting village agents with an increase in January and a decline in both March and May.

Graph 4



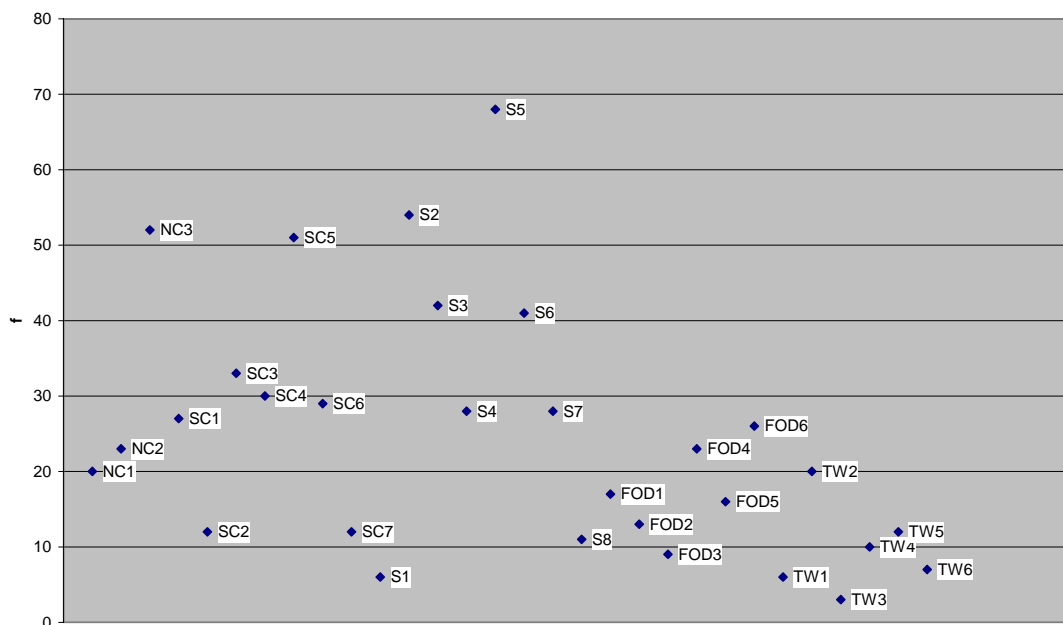
Unfortunately the data from Maiden does not have a socio-demographic breakdown for the parish clusters so it is impossible to describe ethnic profile of any of the areas.

How and Where do People Contact Village Agents

When examining the data for the completed standardised enquiry forms (Gateways) the results reveal a mixed performance from the village agents. The lowest number of returned Gateways, for instance, is three from a village agent in Tewkesbury; the highest is 68 from a village agent in Stroud.

Graph 5

Scatter Graph Showing Number of Gateways Returned to Village Agents by Individual Parish Cluster up to June 2007



Graph 5 above shows that the majority of individual parish clusters fall between 10 and 35 returned Gateway forms. Those village agents in the Forest of Dean (FOD) and Tewkesbury (TW) appear to have fewer returned Gateways than the other cluster areas but village agents from these areas were recruited later than those in the North and South Cotswolds (NC and SC), and Stroud (S). Village agents from Stroud have performed well with four returning over 40 Gateways (the village agent for S1 left after three months).

Meeting the Success Criteria

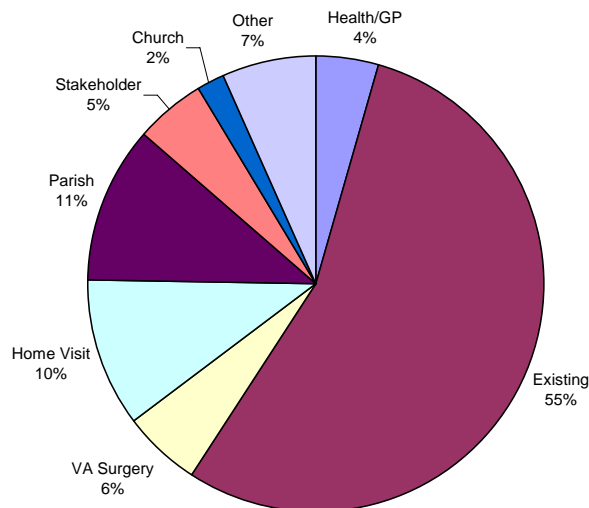
The Success Criteria in the Memorandum of Understanding (Gloucestershire County Council, 2007) identifies:

“Village Agents will run a minimum of one surgery, meet with one local statutory or voluntary group, or visit 4 people in their homes per week or complete other tasks as required by their role in their locality as part of their outreach services, this will aid in publicising their presence and in establishing a sustainable community network”.

It states that there will be a minimum of 1500 village agent contacts made for each three month period from April 2007 to June 2008. The target for April 2007 to June 2007 has been more than exceeded with the total number of contacts amounting to 4344 and the total number of meetings reaching 744. The two charts below illustrate the different places village agents have made contact with people, the number of people they have made contact with and the number of meetings which have arisen from these contacts.

Diagram 1

Points of Contact for Village Agents up to June 2007



The diagram above shows that the greatest point of contact for village agents arises from existing sources such as attending meetings already established (e.g. WI, lunch clubs). Parish and home visits are the second and third main points of contact. It will be interesting to see as the project continues and the

village agent becomes more well known whether other points of contact, such as the village agent's surgery, play a bigger role.

Diagram 2

Number of Meetings arising from Points of Contact up to June 2007

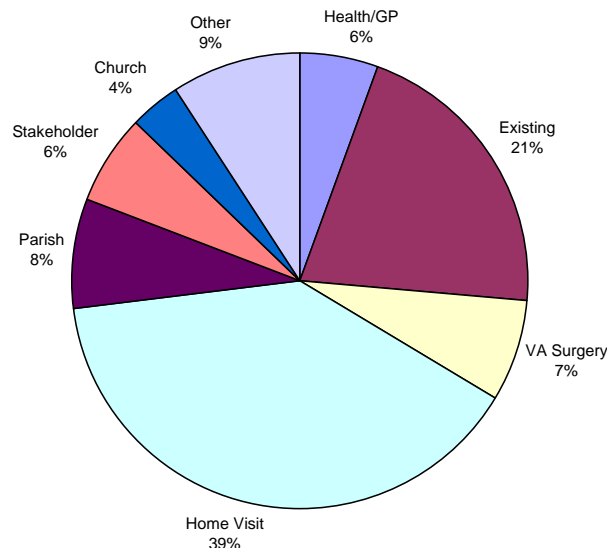
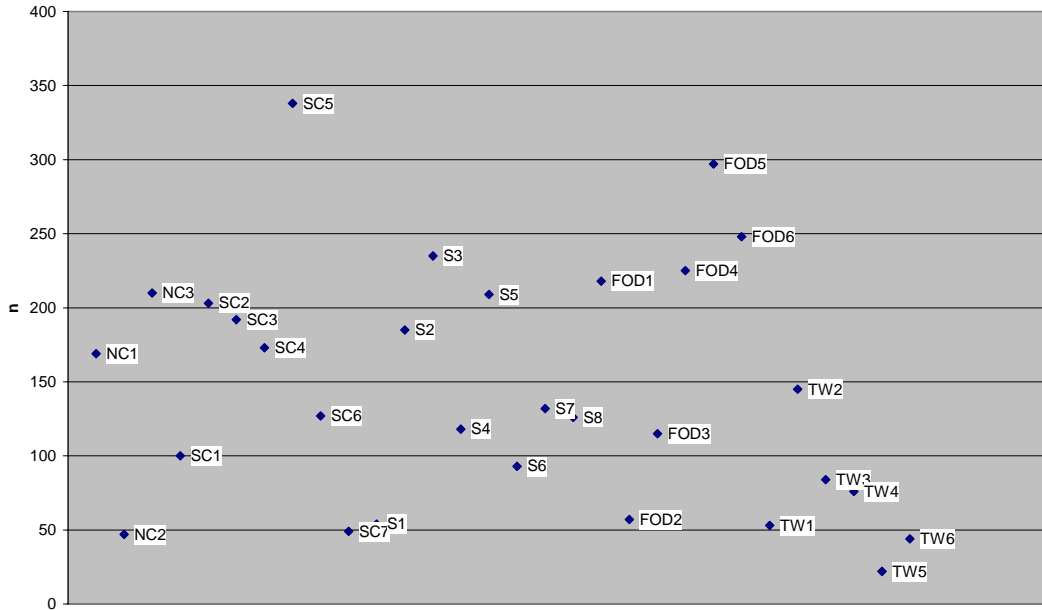


Diagram 2 illustrates that when it comes to holding meetings with people the most popular location is in people's homes followed by existing meetings (e.g. WI and lunch clubs). As the Memorandum of Understanding stipulates that village agents should meet four people per week in their own homes it is encouraging that the data reveals home visits are the preferred option.

When looking at the individual parish clusters and village agent performance, the results in the graph 6 below illustrate quite a dispersed range with the majority of village agents making between 50 and 250 contacts. SC5 has made the most contacts and TW5 the least. Indeed, the data for Tewkesbury reveals that there is a clustering of the parishes for this area with village agents only making between 25 and 150 contacts. None of the other areas cluster in this way, even those village agents from the Forest of Dean, who were recruited the same time as those from Tewkesbury, have a wider spread of results. All village agents from Stroud seem fairly consistent and cluster around the middle range rather than occupying either the lower or higher end of the scale.

Graph 6

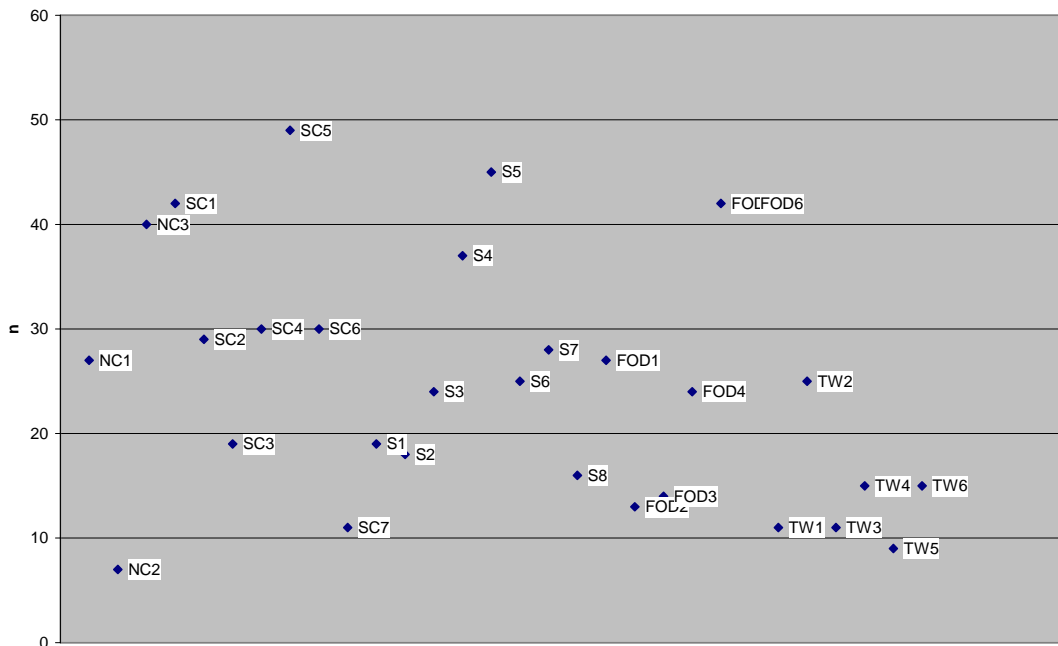
Scatter Graph Showing Number of Contacts Made by Village Agents by Individual Parish Cluster up to June 2007



Graph 7 again illustrates that village agents from Tewkesbury are holding fewer meetings than in any other area as they cluster between 9 and 25 meetings. NC2 has held the fewest meetings but the village agent for this parish cluster left and the village agent for NC3 took over and now oversees both. SC5 has held the highest number of meetings. The majority of meetings held by all village agents range between 10 and 40.

Graph 7

Scatter Graph Showing Village Agent Meetings for Individual Parish Clusters up to June 2007



Main Issues and Topics for Contacting Village Agents

Up to June 2007, the top ten topics or concerns people over 50 had in the defined parish clusters which prompted them to contact a village agent are:

Topic	Gateways
Support – family/neighbour concerns	148
Support general	78
Fire and safety – smoke alarms	67
DWP - assessment	61
Helpdesk OT (Occupational Therapy)	57
Energy – home heating/insulation	44
HIA – minor work (Home Improvements Agency)	35
Age Concern Service	24
Council	24
Healthy lifestyle	24

Unfortunately, as these statistics cannot be broken down by individual parish cluster, the data cannot be related back to the information provided by Maiden on each individual parish cluster. However, this breakdown will be available for future interim reports. What can be said in this particular report is that both benefits and energy schemes have again made it into the top ten. When comparing the data up to June 2007 to that up to April 2007 (see Baseline Report) both benefits and energy were in the top ten list of topics for up to April 2007 but energy was in seventh place and has moved up to sixth; benefits in the form of assessments for the DWP has remained in fourth place. Queries about benefits and energy have almost doubled over the intervening two months. Transport, which was second in the list up to April 2007, has not even made it into the top ten for June 2007. There is still no mention of volunteering in either top ten. It will be interesting to see what developments there are for these topics in the forthcoming months.

The Memorandum of Understanding states that for both benefit applications and referrals to energy schemes there should be an increase of 5% by June 2008, with a 1% as the target for June 2007. However, as there is no baseline figure to work from, the returned Gateways, starting from December 2006 onwards, will provide a guide to how these topics are increasing or decreasing in importance. As there has already been an increase in interest for both then the outlook looks promising. Volunteering is the other topic identified in the Success Criteria in the Memorandum of Understanding which stated that by June 2007 20 volunteers will be matched with appropriate opportunities. There have been 22 returned Gateways relating to volunteering so this will be measured over the forthcoming months. There are a number of examples of good practice in relation to volunteering in the Gloucestershire area. Three such examples are:

- Time Bank in North Cotswolds
- Minibus scheme to take people shopping being developed in North Cotswolds
- Links with Tesco for discount (£5) for internet shopping

The monthly evaluation reports (see Appendix II for this information presented as pie charts) which collates the Gateway information identifies topics the village agents have provided help with for services, signposting and/or referrals. As the Memorandum of Understanding focuses on benefits, energy schemes and volunteering, the data relating to the help given by village agents in relation to these is presented below.

	Dec 06	Jan 07	Feb 07	Mar 07	Apr 07	May 07
Benefits	14%	19%	10%	9%	7%	19%
Energy	0	17%	1%	3%	0	2%
Volunteering	18%	2%	6%	4%	6%	7%

The data recorded for help given by village agents for benefits, energy schemes and volunteering does not illustrate any clear pattern or trends as the statistics increase and decline on a monthly basis. The data for benefits has seen a dip in help provided from February to April and for energy referrals and volunteering there is a high percentage of help given in the first month, a dramatic decline and then small fluctuations. The data provided over the next few months may reveal more of patterns or distinct trends.

2. Analysis of Adult Helpdesk statistics.

The Success Criteria in the Memorandum of Understanding stated that there should be 500 village agent contacts for each three month period from April 2007 to June 2008. Each village agent is to make one contact per week to the Adult Helpdesk to gather information relating to services or refer a client. The data for the adult helpdesk, however, reveals that the target cannot be achieved and the Project Manager for the Gloucestershire pilot said the target was 'unrealistic'. However, when comparing the number of contacts to the Adult Helpdesk in April, May and June 2006 and comparing those figures to April, May and June 2007, there has been an increase in contacts of 33% 100% and 105% respectively. This produces an average of 79%. What is especially encouraging is that there is an increase in 'Fulls', which are contacts that result in a request for a service from social care, not just an enquiry and signposting. In terms of 'Quick' contacts, which do involve

enquiries and signposting, the increases are 20%, 63% and 46% for the months April, May and June 2007.

What must be noted here, however, is that the figures for the 2007 data have included those contacts which are not on the postcode list for the original list of parishes. The 2006 data only contains contacts for the postcodes of the original list of parishes so the percentage increases for 2007 must take this into consideration.

3. Best practice diaries and case studies

Village Agent Diaries

The village agents keeping monthly diaries detailing interesting events or examples of good practice are:

Lou Kemp (Stroud)
Christine Lingard (Stroud)
Pauline Thompson (Cotswold)
Richard Lee (Tewkesbury)
Eileen Latham (Forest of Dean)

APRIL 2007

Day in the Life of a Village Agent – Christine Lingard

My working day began at 9.30am when I left home for the village of Frampton-on-Severn to get to a home visit at 10am.

This visit was to a very disabled, 86year old gentleman, living on his own with very little support. Mr P. is a widower, with no children. He lives in a Local Authority bungalow and receives 1 hour week LA help with domestic tasks. He would be housebound if he did not have an electric mobility vehicle. I have visited Mr P several times to discuss various issues. The main issue has been his garden path, which was too narrow for his mobility vehicle, causing him to tip over on his vehicle whilst getting in and out of his house. After many weeks of talking with Care and Repair, trying to get the job done as a matter of urgency, today I found the path had been widened, which pleased Mr P very much. He also has lawns in his front and back gardens, and because the LA were only cutting his grass twice a year he became very bothered by the state of his lawns, not being able to keep them tidy himself. He asked several

weeks ago if it was possible to gravel over his front lawn, which he looks out onto most of the time. I talked with Care and Repair, who after I had measured the lawn, told me the area was too large for them to deal with. After costing the job to cover the lawn with gravel, I contacted the British Legion to see if they would cover the cost. After a visit to Mr P the matter is being considered, and I have been told that it is probable that the cost will be met. We have to wait 2 more weeks for a decision.

Care and Repair have also allowed more gardening help for Mr P under their Gardening Scheme. I met and talked with the Gardener who is to do 1 hour every 2 weeks for the rest of the year. Mr P says he feels boosted by the help he is now getting.

My second home visit at 10.30am was to an 89 year old gentleman, in poor health, living on his own, with little support. This visit was one of many where I have been involved in getting Mr A help from Age Concern, after being discharged recently from hospital. He now has increased OT aids in his home, which have improved his ability to cope. Mr A has also benefited from weekly visits from a support worker from Age Concern, who has brought any shopping he has needed. This support is limited for just a few weeks after discharge from hospital and is due to cease. We discussed any possible problems that may occur without this support. Follow-up work may need to be done in this area. Today Mr A wanted me to take books and jig-saw puzzles to a Charity shop. This I did later in the day.

At 11am I arrived at Frampton Day Centre, where I go most Wednesdays. Here I met and talked with 20 members of local village communities. Various issues were discussed – help with gardening and the Care and Repair scheme – help in the home – fixing of safety door chains- home insulation improvements through the Warm and Well Scheme – OT aids to help with mobility. I also met with Andy Foster the Neighbourhood Warden, who visited the Day Centre. We discussed the fixing of safety door chains that he has been helping to arrange, and discussed other issues we are involved in with other members of the community.

A Lay Preacher and local GP visited the Day Centre to speak with members and asked me about the new bus services that are due to start in the village early June'07. . Helped serve lunches to Day Centre members, and left at 1.45pm to go to my next home visit.

My next visit was to an 81 year old lady, referred to me by the Community Police Support Officer. Mrs T and her husband were concerned to hear that the only public bus service – The Village Link Bus- is to cease very soon and she was not aware of any other public transport service. Gave details of the new proposed bus service due to start when the Village Link service ceases – early June '07 is all we know at present from the County Transport office. Also

gave details of Community Volunteer Transport service and more information about the Village Agent Project.

Next home visit was to Mrs B 84 years of age. We had discussed at the Day Centre earlier the fact that she had received no contact from Care and Repair about the Gardening Scheme that she had registered for a few weeks ago. After talking with Care and Repair, they said that Mrs B has not returned a form they sent to her on 18 May '07. Mrs B said she did not remember receiving the form but she may have put it away, not realising that it had to be returned. I visited to see if Mrs B had found the form. She had and I helped her complete it and posted it. Telephoned Care and Repair again and left message form on its way.

During the day I made contact with 26 people, and made 2 telephone calls to a lady about Attendance Allowance claim for her husband, who has Alzheimer's Disease – 2 telephone calls to Age Concern about benefit claims and their Clean Sweep Scheme – several calls to Care and Repair about Mr P and Mrs B's gardens – made a call to Gloucester City Council about a recycling issue for members of the community in Elmore, still waiting to be resolved. I also visited Charity shop for Mr A.

Returned home at 3.30pm with 1hours admin work to do.

Diary of a Village Agent

By Lou Kemp. April 2007

Yesterday I received a call (at 8am!) from a lady in who was very distressed about the welfare of her friends and asked me to call them to see what I could do. As it turned out I knew the couple in question as they had been my first home visit as a village agent; Mr and Mrs H.

Mr H is 95 and only relatively recently had to stop driving due to diminished vision. He also was suffering from some short term memory loss, but apart from that was a charming and humorous gentleman.

Mrs H is 87, a strong character with a clear mind and kind heart. She helped me to make contact with others in the village who she thought might benefit from a visit from a village agent. I could do little for them on my first visit as Mrs H had "everything under control", although they did look into getting a safety chain after I mentioned it. I also said that I thought a personal alarm would be advisable but sadly Mrs H had no body who she felt could act as initial contact, other than her neighbour who she didn't wish to impose upon.

I rang Mrs H immediately, finding her to be as well organised and as stoic as ever. However it wasn't long before she broke down and I asked her if I could come over and share a cup of tea. I am very aware that many people of Mr and Mrs H's generation do not like to see themselves as "a bother" and need gentle encouragement to be allowed to ask for help.

As is often the case, circumstances had changed and now Mr X was in Gloucester Hospital suffering from a urinary infection, but declining each day he was not with his beloved wife. They had been told that once he was well enough to go home, this could only occur if there was provision for personal care; catch 22.

On the morning that I visited, Mrs H was anxiously waited for the hospital social worker to ring her about what could be done. She asked me if I could be with her when the call came and listen on the other phone to ensure she got her facts straight. She was also anxious to avoid her husband being sent to the rehab ward as he'd been there once before and was unhappy with the noise and atmosphere. Using the V A phone she was able to find out details of costs and availability of a private room, which he might need if nothing else could be organised.

I tried to set up the BT 1571 answer service for her, but unfortunately her phone was not compatible with this service.

The Adult Helpdesk were able to give me the name and contact number of the social worker dealing with Mr H so that I could liaise with him on Mrs H's request.

I have found since I had a day shadowing Abbas at the Helpdesk that I link up with him when I have a query and this has been really helpful

We also discussed Mrs H's transport problems in getting from her village to Gloucester Royal. Unfortunately Stroud Voluntary Services would only go to Stroud Hospital, so Mrs H was reliant on the help of friends and taxis.

By the next day, I was able to give her the details of 2 drivers who although working with the SVA, also did private hospital runs to any of the hospitals at a much reduced rate to a taxi.

I sent her details of respite care provided by The British Legion which Mr H would be eligible for as an ex serviceman.

Most importantly, by speaking with Mrs H's neighbour who was very anxious that she have a personal alarm, and more than happy to be the initial contact number, we persuaded her together that this would be a positive move and not "a last resort" as she had first thought. This is now in process with SDC.

Having spoken to the social worker, apparently it could take several weeks to organise a care package to enable Mr H to return home, once given the all clear. In view of the fact that Mr H is 95 and frail, this is not the best news for this couple. I contacted Age Concern, and sent the details of the post hospital care service available in the Stroud Area to Mrs H. There will be a cost for this, but it may ensure that Mr and Mrs H are united as soon as possible.

Last report is that Mrs H has managed to get her husband into Stroud Hospital by making direct contact with the matron there (despite being told by Gloucester Royal that this was not possible as she didn't have the correct post code). He is more comfortable now and she has easier access to visit.

We had a long chat today on the phone and although I don't feel I did a great deal for them, she knows that I am there if she needs me and that can make such a difference in times of distress.

Any Village Agent vacancies for 87 year olds?

MAY 2007

Pauline Thompson

On May 1st I went to Winstone and helped Mrs.B with her Disability Living Allowance Forms. **Also at the beginning of the month I went round all the villages and renewed the village agent posters.**

I attended the **GRCC Meeting at Highnam** and also **The Bereavement Meeting in Stroud** which was very well attended and lots of useful information was gained.

On May 14th I visited the **Mobile Library** at Winstone and met several new people. I also visited Mr. W and Mrs. F - previous clients and was introduced to Mr. Gordon Roach who invited me to attend the **new Parish Council Meeting** at the end of the month.

Over the next few days I went to see Mrs. J to see if I could help further with her problems. I attended **The Friends of Rendcomb Surgery Luncheon Club**. Later in month I prepared all the flyers, posters, news releases for my **Coffee Morning** to be held in Duntisborne Abbots in June, and went out to distribute all the material.

I attended the **Community Consultation at Maisemore Village Hall** and joined in all the work-shops. At the end of the month I attended the GRCC Meeting and the CVS Meeting at the CDC Offices.

I visited Mrs. J and went to see a new client at Duntisbourne Abbots who needed help with the servicing of her stair-lift. On the evening of May 31st I will attend the new Parish Council Meeting of Winstone.

JUNE 2007

Pauline Thompson

04 June - Computer Time

05 June - My Coffee Morning at Duntisbourne Abbots which 10 people attended. It was the first event after the re-opening of the up-dated Hall. Those that were present would like a coffee-morning every couple of months.

06 June - GRCC meeting at CDC - Stakeholders

07 June - computer,office work and in the afternoon visits to Mr.Williams and Mrs. Fitzpatrick in Winstone

08 June - phone calls and computer

11-16June - Holiday

18 June - Office work

19 June - Visit Mrs. Joinson, Cirencester and new clients Mr. & Mrs. Parker at Duntisbourne Abbots

I met Mr.& Mrs. Parker at my Duntisbourne Abbots Coffee Morning on June 5th. Mr. Parker has a deteriorating back condition which had recently been made worse by a very heavy fall down the stairs.This happened one evening and Mrs.Parker had to call an ambulance and her husband was kept in hospital overnight. This has clearly shaken Mrs.Parker. Resulting from this O.T. have been out to access for hand-rails etc. Mr. Parker is now unable to manage a very large garden and Mrs. Parker would like help with her house-work They are both in their mid 80's.I continue to visit and she is now applying for a Carer's Allowance. .

20 June - Visit to DISC in Cirencester and their Day Centre

Computer and office time

21 June - Virtual Team Meeting at Westcote House, Cirencester

Office,computer and phone calls

- 23 June - The Duntisbournes Village Fete
25 June - Duntisbourne Abbots
Also visit to Anchor in Cirencester
27 June - Meeting with District Nurses - Westcote House, Cirencester
Office time
28 June - GRCC Monthly Meeting, Community House

The diaries reveal that village agents are providing valuable help, information and assistance to members of the community over the age of 50, whether in their own homes and on a more individual level, or at Day Centres and talking to groups. The accounts of helping individuals on a one-to-one basis are extremely interesting and identify the different issues village agents deal with on a daily basis ranging from gardening, problems with transport and mobility, health, and personal safety. The diary provided by Christine Lingard is particularly useful in highlighting how a village agent can provide an invaluable link between individuals and other organisations whether council or voluntary based. In one day alone, Christine deals with Care and Repair (and their Gardening Scheme), Occupational Therapy, Age Concern, the British Legion, Frampton Day Centre, and Community Volunteer Transport.

Best Practice Case Studies

The following case study highlights the work of Jenny Cunningham, a village agent in South Cotswolds, in setting up a library clubs at the village halls in Siddington and Ampney Circus. It is a successful social occasion organised once a month with refreshments provided. Those attending get to reserve and collect books and discuss the books they have read.

Taken from *This Week in Community and Adult Care*, June 2007

It's Library Club but not as we know it

Libraries & Information have been frequently been contacted by village agents looking for information on the RNIB service and a lot of visits to Visually Impaired customers have come from this route.

In January, Jenny Cunningham, Village Agent for Ampney Crucis and Siddington, came to Cirencester Library Club to get some information from

one of our guest speakers. She thought the Library Club was an excellent way of getting people together and talked to me about bringing large groups into the library to join our existing club. There were unfortunately several barriers to this, no room in the club being one of them, along with no volunteers to transport the customers!

Undeterred Jenny and Service Development Librarian, Joanna Palmer, came up with a solution that at present seems to suit everyone. Jenny holds Library Clubs once a month in Ampney Crucis and Siddington Village halls, it's very much a social occasion, refreshments are provided, the members discuss the books they have read and have started to write reviews for the Book Choice magazine. As well as a start up book collection I provided Jenny with membership forms for each customer and a detailed form listing the type of books enjoyed. Before each club Jenny selects more books if necessary and checks to see if any reservations have arrived.

Joanna has visited each club to demonstrate the Daisy Player and enrolled customers to the RNIB service as a result. It's a simple way of reaching home-restricted borrowers who can get to their Village hall - Jenny has been able to arrange transport for that - but not the library. We are able to get more active borrowers and issues and the customers swap recommendations for books and enjoy the social context.

For more information contact: Joanna Palmer, Service Development Officer, Libraries & Information on 01452 655841

C. RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED UP TO THE NEXT INTERIM REPORT (NOVEMBER 2007)

1. Monthly diaries from village agents
2. Case studies identified by village agents and the people involved
3. Focus groups conducted by village agents with voluntary and statutory organisations.
4. Monitoring to continue of Gateways, monthly evaluation forms, village agent performance, and helpdesk statistics.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix I

Gateway

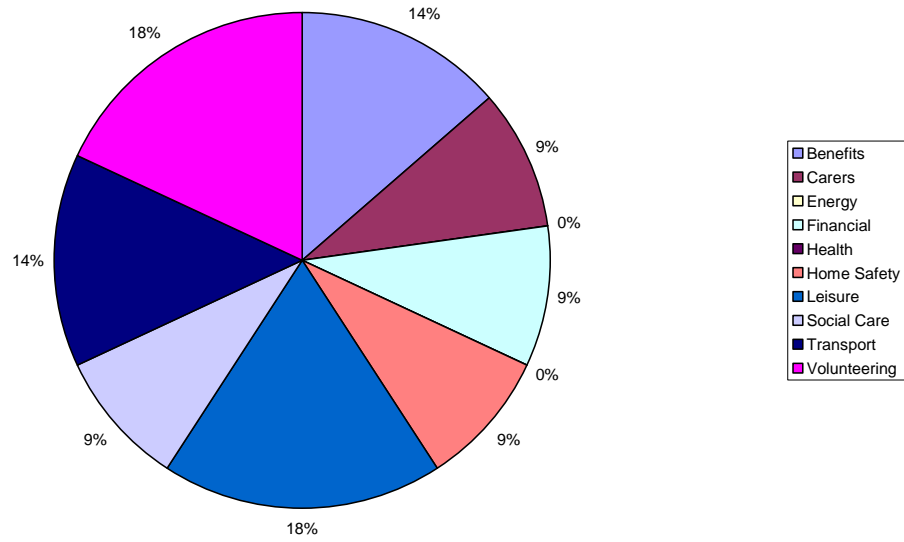
Village Agents

Name:					Date	
Tel no.					Reference	
Consent to share information		Yes			Address: Postcode: Directions to property:	
		No				
Married	Single	Widow	Widower	Partner		
Gender	Male	Female	DOB			
Ethnicity			Age			
Contact notes (e.g. hard of hearing)			Live alone?			
Housing	Own property	Family owned	Private rental			
Housing Association		District Council				
Overview:						
Further Action						
Referring Agency –Please return this form after it has been actioned with brief outcome to gateways@gloucestershire.gov.uk						
Agency			Needs		Outcome/Follow up	
Adult Helpdesk Socialcare.eng@gloucestershire.gov.uk						
Care and Repair gateway@careandrepairstroud.co.uk						

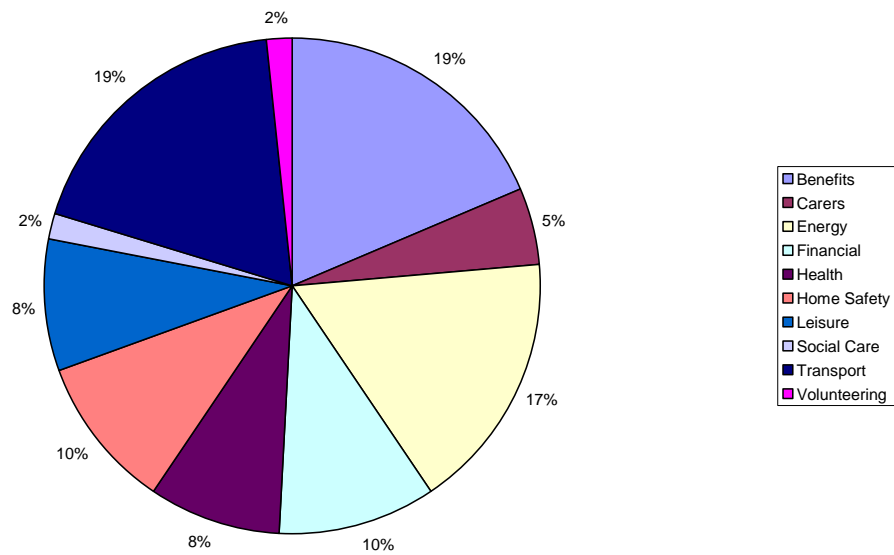
Fire and Rescue Home.safety@glosfire.gov.uk		
Benefits Gloucester.lsgloucestershire@dwp.gsi.gov.uk		
Libraries – volunteering: sally.middleton@gloucestershire.gov.uk Phone individual library for clubs etc.		
Warm and Well eeac@swea.co.uk		
GUiDE and PALS enquiries@guide-information.org.uk		
Age Concern janperkin@ageconcernglos.org.uk		
Lydbrook Community Care lydcare@btinternet.com		
Citizens Advice Bureau		
Volunteering volunteers@sc-vs.com		
DISC jane@sc-vs.com		
Active Lifestyles (Cotswold) jeanette.hughes@cotswold.gov.uk		
Carers Gloucestershire mail@gloscarers.org.uk		
GRCC kated@grcc.org.uk		
Safer Community Team callcentre@gloucestershire.police.uk		
Gloucestershire Lifestyles office@gloslifestyles.co.uk		
Community Nurses/GPs		
Time Banks		
Housing		
Other		

Appendix II

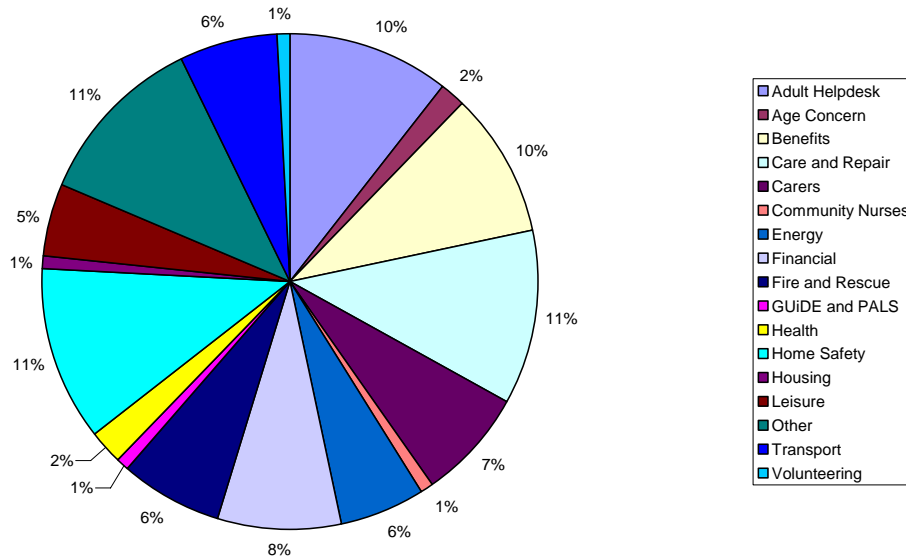
Services, Signposting and/or Referrals Provided by Village Agents for December 2006



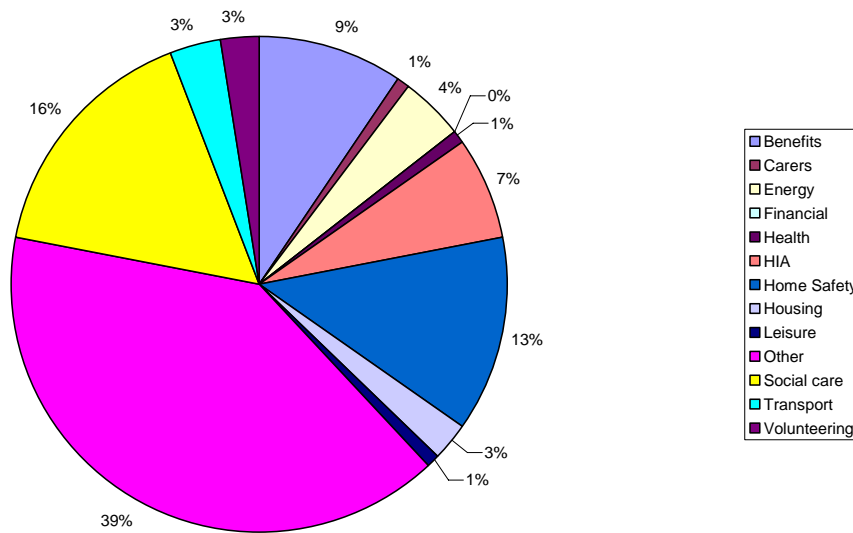
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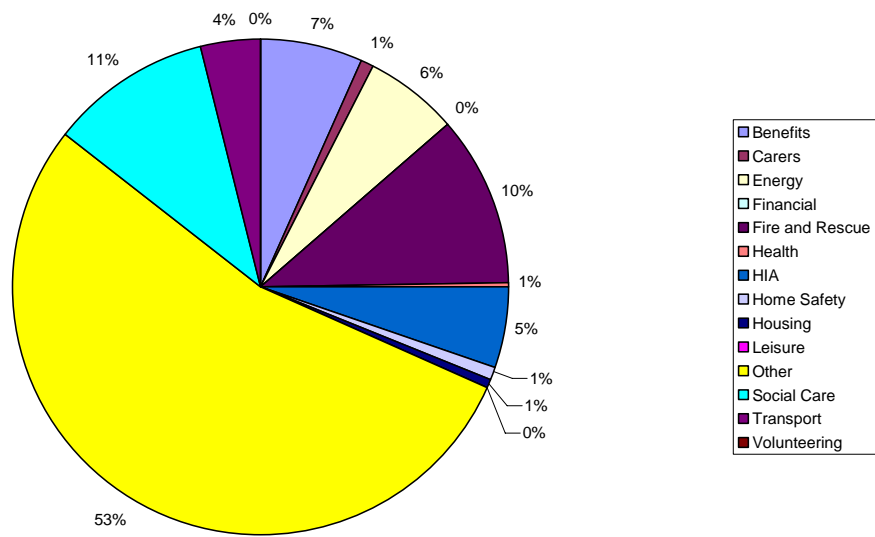
Services, Signposting and/or Referrals Provided by Village Agents for February 2007



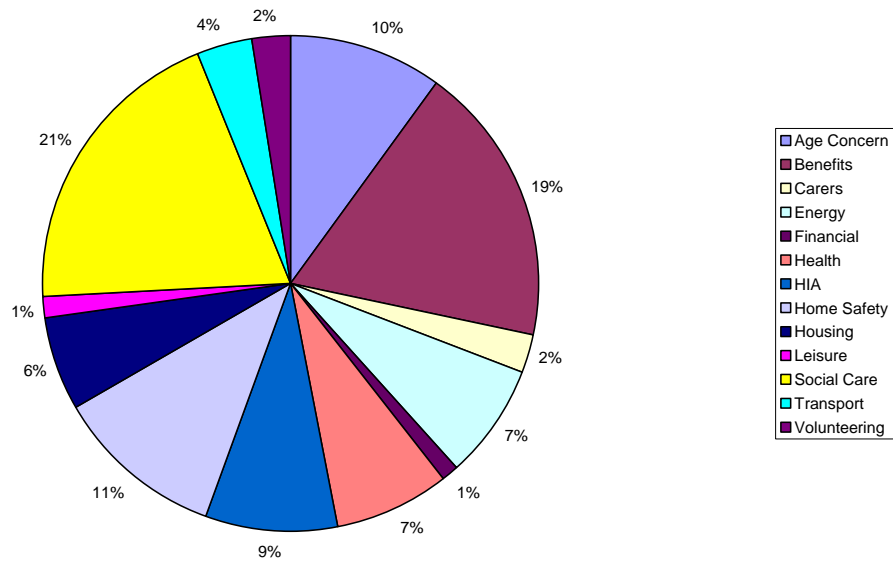
Services, Signposting and/or Referrals Provided by Village Agents for March 2007



Services, Signposting and/or Referrals Provided by Village Agents for April 2007



Services, Signposting and/or Referrals Provided by Village Agents for May 2007



Appendix III

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY IDENTIFICATION FORM

Name of person completing form:_____

Age:_____

Gender:_____

Location/Parish:_____

Are you a Village Agent: Yes/No

Does the case study relate to:

Energy scheme enquiries Yes/No

Fire service/Ambulance service Yes/No

Local-based issue Yes/No

Please provide a description of the case study (e.g. outline who is/was involved, where it is taking/or took place, how many people are/were affected).

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

What factors led to the emergence of this issue?

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

What is the outcome? Has the issue been resolved to yours/ and others satisfaction?

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

What was the role of the village agent in the case study?

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Are there any outstanding problems or concerns relating to the case study?

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary