

Summer 2020 Newsletter

Home Plus is a citywide service aimed at enabling and maintaining independent living through improving health at home, helping to prevent falls and cold related health conditions, for those with disabilities and people with long term health conditions throughout Leeds. The service aims to help individuals lead full lives and at the same time stay out of hospital and institutional care. Care & Repair Leeds is working in partnership with Age UK Leeds and Groundwork's Green Doctors to deliver the service.



Hello, I am Wendy Longstaff and have been working for the Home Plus Service since January 2020 as an Outreach Worker. The Outreach Worker's post is part of the Home Plus (Leeds) service and is focused on helping to reduce health inequalities in the most deprived areas of Leeds and within the BAME communities, increasing awareness, access to and referral to the Home Plus service. I am really interested in connecting and developing positive relationships with a range of people and organisations living, working and supporting people in LS7, LS9, LS10, LS11 and LS14.

Contact me

If you would like a presentation (via online methods) or an informal chat on the Home Plus Service, my contact details are Wendy Longstaff **07474 441871** or email me at wendy.longstaff@care-repair-leeds.org.uk.

Home Plus Services

Equipment: Bath step, free standing toilet frame, raised toilet seat, pick up stick, grab rails inside and outside the house

Heating: one-off boiler or gas fire service, boiler, gas fire and radiator repairs, replace radiators, replace electric or gas fires, replacing a boiler that is beyond economical repair (if meets qualifying criteria) fit CO detectors

Energy saving: energy efficiency advice, switching of fuel providers, fitting energy-saving LED lightbulbs, draught-proofing windows and doors, reflective radiator panels

Repairs: leaks, taps, toilets, repairs to showers, repairs to pumps in wet rooms, seals around baths and sinks, sockets and switches, loss of electricity

Advice & Support: benefit checks and completing applications for pension age benefits.



FAQs

Do I have to meet certain criteria to qualify for your services? Yes, there are certain criteria clients need to meet in order to qualify for our services. If unsure, please give us a call and we can confirm. If you do not qualify with us, we will do our very best to give you another service to contact.

Will contractors be wearing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)? Yes, during the current crisis, all our contractors will wear masks and gloves when visiting a property, and adhere to social distancing guidelines, although they may need to remove the masks occasionally once they start working.

How many boiler services are people eligible for? Each household is entitled to a single boiler service, except in special circumstances.

What are the limitations for getting a repair? There is a £100 limit to the funding we can offer towards a repair that is causing a hazard to your health, and we can only offer one repair job a year.

Do you fit long external rails? No, we can only fit short external grab rails by the entrance door. Please contact Adult Social Care (Tel: 0113 2224401) if you wish to request a long external rail, or Leeds Directory ((0113 378 4610) though you would need to pay for their services.

Do you repair windows? No. we can only repair ground floor window locks to improve security.

Home Plus Services during Covid-19

Care & Repair Leeds Service

Since the Covid-19 pandemic hit the UK, lockdown has meant that we have had to change the way we deliver some of our services; we have suspended Support Worker home visits, and they are now carrying out assessments with clients over the phone. We wanted to find another way to provide support and decided to get in touch with clients we have assisted over the past year who were in the vulnerable category (over 70). They would have specifically been advised to stay at home by the government and were more likely to need extra support during this time. Below is data on the 'check-in' calls we have made so far.

Out of a total of 750 clients contacted so far, we have been able to talk to **486 people**. **356** of them already had support, either from family, neighbours, churches, or friends. Sadly **55** of the clients had passed away since we last carried out work for them. We were able to refer **74** people to various services, including the Leeds City Council COVID-19 helpline, supermarket home deliveries and the Leeds Directory.

Clients we could not contact

- Uncontactable/Phone disconnected 47%
- Call minder/BT call guardian 6%
- Did not pick up/answer phone 49%

Some of the clients we were unable to make contact with had unfortunately died, so account for the uncontactable/Phone disconnected data. Calls made to clients who did not pick up or answered the phone were contacted several times. We will continue to call clients to help and support them in whatever way we can.



A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRACTORS

Our contractors have continued to work throughout COVID 19, providing a valuable service to everyone needing help and support, working alongside our NHS health professionals to ensure work is completed to enable people to leave hospital, therefore freeing up beds for others. All the contractors are adhering to the government's COVID 19 safety guidelines, working safely when in clients' homes, by wearing the appropriate PPE equipment such as gloves and masks, and asking clients to stay in a separate room whilst carrying out their work.

Client Feedback Quotes

- "The work was carried out by a very nice lady, keeping to social distancing, and it was a great job with no mess, quick & clean – brilliant" **June 2020**
- "Was pleased the contractor was here within the week" **June 2020**
- "Very happy with the engineer that came out. He was efficient and very pleasant man to deal with and fixed our boiler for us" **June 2020**
- "Contractor was great and managed to repair the floorboards which was not straightforward. Quality of work great" **June 2020 - Additional Support** - receiving support from Age UK Leeds with housekeeping and weekly telephone calls from Age UK volunteer.



Case study

Welfare call made to a client who had adequate support as he had a worker to assist him with the weekly shopping and any other additional tasks. The client however spoke about struggling due to lack of walking aids to assist with his mobility. Discussed this further and the client agreed for a referral to be passed to the Domiciliary Physiotherapist.

Case study

I talked to one client who was having issues with their feet and realised through my experience as a Podiatrist that it was a foot ulcer. I phoned Podiatry Services on their behalf for urgent treatment.

Case study

I phoned a client aged 85 living alone and with multiple health conditions, she uses a Zimmer to mobilise and she was very upset. She spoke little English, but I was able to communicate in Punjabi with her. She began to tell me about the problems she was having with shielding and lockdown. She cannot cook meals herself and regularly used someone to cook for her, but that person went abroad two weeks ago and hadn't returned yet. The client suspected that she could not get her return flight due to the pandemic. In the meantime, she cannot go outside to shop, she lives alone, and her only child lives abroad. She was crying and sobbing inconsolably. I asked her how she has been managing to eat. She said the local church was delivering some food items to her like soup tins and eggs, that she really appreciated but she really needed Indian food to meet her dietary and cultural requirements.

She did not know what to do and felt helpless, she also said "No one asks me how I am or how I am feeling. Every hospital appointment I had has been cancelled because of the virus." I asked her if she had had any lunch and she said she had some bread. I assured her that I would find help for her and call her back. I suggested Sikh Elders and her local Sikh temple, but she said the meals on wheels from Sikh elders were costly on a pension. She also informed me that her local temple is closed. I made some enquiries from community contacts and had a few replies back of local schemes catering for Asian languages and Asian food shopping. I was able to refer her to a community group of volunteers set up recently to respond to the pandemic, who confirmed they were able to provide Punjabi speaking volunteers to help with shopping at supermarkets and Asian food stores and provide cooked Indian food if required. They were also able to provide a friendly phone call chat service to those feeling isolated during the Lockdown period. I checked the next day and the client said that she had received hot Indian food to last her a few days and that they were shopping for her in the evening.

Green Doctor Service

Since 24th March the Green Doctors have adapted their service to a telephone energy advice service and have put a great new flyer together and created a catchy video for social media. They have so far supported 335 households with telephone energy related advice & support – 193 of which required emergency pre-payment meter top-ups. Since the 18th May the team have been working closely with the Leeds Local Welfare Support Scheme (LWSS) on a pilot project attempting to improve upon the present system by providing a more sustainable, holistic, and far reaching alternative. The need for an integrated service has arisen from Leeds City Council being inundated with requests during this Covid 19 phase, with approximately 10 -15 people each day calling for emergency pre-payment meter top-ups. People are now referred to the Green Doctors who then contact the client, arrange payment either directly to the energy account, via bank transfers, or physical cash top-up. These alternative options to receive the emergency payments are a great improvement on the previous cash only method.

Case study

A client said he was getting very worried as he was self-isolating, and the gas meter had a recovery rate of 70%. This had been happening for over 2 years that every time he was topping up, he lost a large proportion of that money. We rang Npower (got through straight away) and asked for the recovery rate to be as low as possible. The call handler said there was a £36 debit on the pre-payment meter (ppm). We agreed to postpone payment during the current COVID-19 crisis, and he can repay at £3.70 a week once he is able to get back outside. So, the 70% recovery rate has gone forever. He will get a card today to clear the £36. Npower also offered him £40 free credit to use, as he is vulnerable and cannot get out at the moment. We also maximised the emergency credit from £6 to £45, we only did this because he said he did not have anyone to top up for him. We put him on the smart meter waiting list so he can top up from his phone at a later date.

I also dug a little deeper into his online account and saw that from 2016 to the start of 2020 he had arrears on his gas of around £400; this was from an old credit meter account. I stated that we could sort this out when we go out for a visit. The next few weeks are critical for this client due to medical conditions/mental health needs and getting his gas on for now was more important than the £400 he owed.

For more information contact us on **0808 168 3547** or **0113 238 0601**, or email us at greendocorleeds@groundwork.org.uk. Visit our website: www.thegreendocors.org



Age UK Leeds

Age UK Leeds can support people by:

- Providing advice on pension age benefits and welfare, care, housing, and local services including support to access disability benefits
- Providing information, advice, and support to access online shopping services, money and other services people may need while self-isolating
- Giving a friendly phone call
- Connecting people with a volunteer who can help them get online to shop, set up video calling to stay in touch with family and friends, etc.
- Help at Home (paid for service): providing shopping, cleaning, gardening, etc.
- Our SWIFT team and Joining Forces (older veterans) project will provide 1-2-1 support over the phone

Case study

Mr T is 74 years old and lives alone. He rang up on Age UK Leeds's advice line and explained that although he was getting food delivered by his local hub, he wasn't receiving enough toilet rolls or any cleaning products. The client was troubled by scams going around in his local area, therefore didn't have anyone he could trust to help him with shopping. The advice worker suggested he make telephone orders through Morrisons; however, the client didn't have a bankcard to pay for the delivery. Age UK contacted his local hub and explained his concerns and agreed to provide a one-off shop before his local hub could set up support for household goods. Age UK's advice worker rang the client and took a shopping list, went out shopping and delivered the required products for him using their Winter Pressure Fund. The client was thrilled and could not believe that Age UK was giving these supplies to him without charging him any money. The client said: "Thank you very much for bringing me the very needed goods! I can do my dishes and clean my kitchen now!"

Simply call us on **0113 389 3000** or **0113 389 3010** or email us at frontofhouse@ageukleeds.org.uk



THANK YOU TO ALL THE HOME PLUS STAFF

During this period of uncertainty, we know staff have found it difficult at times with the sudden changes to their working days, but everyone has adjusted well and continues to provide a professional service to our most vulnerable clients within the community. Clients who we have contacted have been really pleased to receive the check-in calls, and to know that we are still available for support and advice and that 'someone cares.

Contact Us

Care & Repair Leeds (Home Plus Service)

If you would like to make a referral, please contact the Care & Repair office either on **0113 2406009** or via email enquiries@care-repair-leeds.org.uk. Visit our website: <https://care-repair-leeds.org.uk>

