

# MaDE WEEK

(16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023)

A multi-agency discharge event

Report produced by Slough Council for Voluntary Service



The collaborative effort of **NHS, Adult Social Care, Slough CVS, and local community organisations** brought together a successful **MaDE Week**, focusing on enhancing patient support and improving discharge processes. A diverse team, including senior management, operational staff, and community volunteers, helped to engage with patients and their families and signpost them into vital support services, ranging from befriending initiatives to digital assistance. Additionally, the team emphasised the importance of vaccines and provided essential health advice, with participation from various organisations, including Berkshire Vision, Health and Diabetes Community Champions, East Berkshire Age Concern, Cadent Energy Saving and Wellbeing Friends Service, further enriching the experience.

Kinder Bassi, Community Connector Manager, summarised the week as a resounding success, highlighting the collective effort that contributed to empowering patients to take up community support services to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a safe and secure hospital discharge process.



## Aims

The primary **aims** of the MaDE event in mid-October 2023 were to:

- Provide essential information to incoming WPH patients and visitors.
- Offer accessible befriending, energy-saving, and cost-of-living information to those most in need.
- Increase awareness regarding immunisations, vaccines and flu jabs.
- Enhance residents' awareness of local services through the Slough Directory for Health and Wellbeing.

## Snapshot

- **30** patients signposted at reception in community support services.
- **46** patients supported with WPH discharge referrals.
- **10** out-of-area referrals, still guided with relevant information and resources.

## Approach

In a pioneering move within Frimley, Slough prioritised the role of the voluntary sector in the local community. This led to the engagement of Slough CVS in providing a dedicated service within Wexham Park Hospital (WPH), aiding patients, families, and staff in accessing crucial information from the community and voluntary sector. **This initiative addresses non-clinical aspects, enabling service users to access diverse services including community exercises, art classes, counselling, support for the visually impaired, digital inclusion**

projects, gardening activities, book clubs, access to food banks, and assistance with cost-of-living concerns.

The Community Connector project was launched during the initial MaDE Week in March 2023 at WPH, with the active participation of the voluntary sector. Since then, Slough CVS has expanded the initiative, focusing on providing a vital community signposting service aimed at relieving pressure on the NHS and enhancing hospital discharge procedures. The project primarily entails guiding patients towards essential community support services, ensuring a smooth transition from hospital care to their homes.



## Summary

During the October MaDE Week, SCVS initially managed the reception area, while the Community Connectors from Slough CVS extended visits to patients on the wards and the discharge lounge. Data analysis indicates that **80%** of the patients were Slough residents, predominantly engaged at the reception and ward areas. They were provided with vital information on cost-of-living, befriending support services, and guidance on accessing the Wellbeing for Slough Community Directory of Activities and Services.

Our event successfully cultivated a positive rapport with NHS staff, effectively disseminated crucial post-discharge information to patients, and heightened awareness of local support services, encouraging patients to reintegrate into the community.

## Community Connectors



Throughout Made Week, our Community Connectors and volunteers has successfully guided a total of **76** Slough residents toward community engagement and activities, providing them with valuable information and advice. Additionally, we issued **6** Slough Foodbank vouchers to discharged patients facing minimal home assistance. Emphasising the approach of 'community support for people returning home from the hospital,' our Community Connector and volunteers provided strength-based discussions in preparation for the patient's safe discharge in partnership with the Hospital Adult Social Care Team. This effort ensured that adequate support was arranged for their return home and reintegration into the community.



Our Community Connector Manager and team have continued to engage with **49** patients across different wards every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, where **90%** of these patients

have been directed to various community activities. Notably, each week, the Community Connector provides detailed follow-up support for individuals in their post-discharge progress, ensuring a smooth transition back home.

## Case Study: Immunisation and Advice

During MaDE week at WPH, Slough CVS played a crucial role in providing up-to-date guidance and advice on various essential vaccinations to patients and visitors. Notably, the team focused on the following main vaccinations:

- **Flu:** Ensuring patients and visitors were informed about the availability and importance of the flu vaccine.
- **Covid-19:** Providing information on the Covid-19 vaccine, including how and where to get vaccinated.
- **Shingles and MMR:** Educating patients and visitors, particularly those in the eligible age groups, about the significance of these vaccinations.

A particularly impactful case involved Mohammed, a 71-year-old volunteer at the WPH visitor shop. He was supported in promptly scheduling his Covid and shingles vaccinations, bypassing the lengthy wait times on the phone with his GP. The volunteer's direct intervention facilitated immediate appointments, bringing Mohammed's relief as he realized he was still eligible for the shingles vaccine.

Moreover, the team successfully advised approximately 60 patients and visitors who were initially unaware of the available immunizations. Additionally, during patient discharge, the Community Connector emphasised the need for patients to directly contact their GPs post-discharge for their Covid-19 vaccinations. As a result, approximately 25% of those informed during MaDE week were able to obtain their Covid-19 vaccinations and flu jabs, thereby contributing to improved community health and well-being.



## Conclusion: The Impact

Our engagement with patients and staff at WPH has revealed their strong preference for a swift return home and a desire to regain confidence post-discharge. The success of MaDE Week in providing crucial information and resources has notably improved mental well-being and reduced pressure on carers. The ongoing presence of Community Connectors (beyond MaDE Week) within the hospital setting has been pivotal in disseminating essential information and promoting voluntary support, significantly boosting patients' confidence during the transition to the home and the community.

### Key highlights include:

- **30** referrals into community support services followed up, indicate reduced loneliness and improved community engagement and mental well-being.
- **26%** of clients increased digital usage through the Slough Directory of Wellbeing Service, aiding in tackling social isolation.
- **25** individuals successfully enrolled in various community activities e.g., exercise, art or walking clubs.
- **10** residents directed to Citizens Advice Bureau and Slough Borough Council for support for housing, debt, and financial advice.

MaDE Week highlighted pressing needs related to **housing, debt, finances, cost of living, and community engagement**, underlining the importance of comprehensive support systems in promoting holistic well-being and sustainable community involvement post-hospital discharge.



## Appendix: Additional Case Study:



### Client background:

Christine, a 79-year-old female, was admitted to Wexham Park Hospital due to severe COPD and water retention. Although initially set for discharge, her health declined due to a urine infection. Christine sought support from the Community Connectors as she felt lonely and isolated and wanted to improve her mental wellbeing.

### Action Taken:

- Christine was referred to the Knit Your Socks Off group, a local knitting and crocheting charity. This has helped her to socialise and focus her energy on something she has a passion for.
- Christine has expressed a desire to become a volunteer for the Wellbeing Befriending Telephone Service, upon discharge, to help others who are isolated and lonely.
- Christine aims to stay engaged, meet people, and attend Community Café's Warm Spaces to overcome her loneliness and socialise with others to help improve her health and wellbeing.



*"I want people to know that I've had a wonderful life, and even if it ends in the hospital, I'll do so gracefully. Meeting incredible people on this ward, especially through the Community Connectors Project, has been a highlight. It's a fantastic way to reach out to older folks like me who often have no visitors and no one to share their day with. The Connectors are a lifeline here; it can feel like a prison at times, but they advocate, signpost, and those like Kinder can connect us with local health services and make a real difference."*

Find out more about  
Community  
Connectors

