

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date: 7 May 2021
Issued by: Rebecca Bird

Issue No: 111/21
Version: 0.1

COUNCIL HELPS RESIDENTS GET BACK THEIR CONFIDENCE AND GET MOBILE

Wokingham Borough Council's Moving with Confidence scheme helps residents who have been shielding or otherwise isolated during the Covid-19 pandemic get back their confidence and get mobile. The scheme started with a successful pilot in summer 2020 that helped 87 residents. In late February 2021, the council began a one-year programme, which has helped 89 individuals so far.

In summer 2020, with its partners in the Wokingham Borough Community Response, the council were seeing an increase in older residents who were deteriorating physically due to Covid restrictions keeping them indoors. This was causing an increase in associated risks such as falls, loss of muscle strength and declining confidence going out and about.

The council created a team with sports and leisure specialists, community physios, occupational therapists, and volunteers from the Link Visiting Scheme and AgeUK Berkshire to help. The sports and leisure specialists do one to one sessions with residents (up to 6 visits depending on need), providing a plan to improve strength and flexibility with a goal of having the individual work up to attending the council's 'Steady Steps' and 'SHINE' programmes. They also identify additional needs and call on other members of the programme as appropriate.

Graham Ebers, deputy chief executive said: "The council's Moving with Confidence scheme is just one of the many ways we are adapting to current needs of our residents. Many of us have had a difficult year and none more so than the elderly who have not had the opportunity to be out and about for much of the last year. The programme has already had 150 referrals and the team have made 315 visits to help residents regain their mobility and confidence.

"For residents who think this programme might help them, contact the Wokingham Borough Community Response's One Front Door by calling Citizens Advice Wokingham on 0808 278 7958 to discuss suitability."

- MORE -

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Marjie Walker, CEO at The Link Visiting Scheme said: "After the first lockdown it was clear that many of our Link Friends hadn't left their home for many months and no longer felt confident to do the usual things they used to before the crisis hit. It has been a pleasure to work with WBC to improve mobility and confidence with our members and we've heard first-hand what a difference it's made. We can't wait to begin our programme of weekly and monthly activities again and this initiative will ensure we can do that safely."

Residents who have benefitted from the scheme have this to say:

Valerie Moon said: "I filled in a survey way back before Christmas (I think) regarding loss of mobility and forgot all about it. As a result, Link must have been in touch with Wokingham council and as a result two delightful young men from the sport and leisure department have been to see me and helped me to exercise. This is a most positive form of help and I really appreciate it.

Ris May said: "Aby and Leah were very helpful. I enjoyed doing the exercises so much that I also recommended Aby and Leah to my friend. I felt very safe with them."

Jill Lawrence said: "The mobility help has been so useful. My walking had declined massively over the last year and to have this help has not only boosted my confidence but made a massive improvement to my physical health. Thank you so much for organising".

Pamela Morgan said: "Two very nice young men came to see me. They taught me some very good exercises that were really beneficial. I found them very encouraging. They also gave me a book called 'Moving with Confidence' which showed all of the exercises. It also had a page advertising all of the other services available in Wokingham which I will find very useful."

How to apply

The programme is open by referral only. Residents can contact the Wokingham Borough Community Response's One Front Door, run by Citizens Advice Wokingham by calling 0808 278 7958 or by visiting <https://citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk/coronavirus/>. The One Front Door will assess the resident's needs and where appropriate make a referral to the council for the scheme. Residents can also contact The Link Visiting Scheme on 0118 979 8019 or Age UK Berkshire on 0118 959 4242 for a referral.

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Further information:

1. More from the Communications, Engagement and Marketing team at CEM@wokingham.gov.uk