

Impact report for the post of Anna Chaplain to Southampton West

as provided by Caraway 2019 to 2024



Lord's Hill and Maybush in Southampton West have over 900 council flats for older people and no care homes and is a deprived area in the city. Many of these people have very complex physical, mental and social needs, and are often unsupported by family. A Chaplain for older people is a new concept and allows support to be given to those in distress and at times of loss and transitions and works alongside the local churches.

Spanning the pandemic, MH, a part time Chaplain, has started and run two weekly social gatherings of about 20 guests each, visited at least 50 homes for spiritual support including blessings, prayer, bereavement and loss support, and sat alongside those who were lonely or dying. She has delivered up to 100 monthly spiritual resource packs called Vintage Adventure @ Home, also adding another 25 people to the postal mailing list and gives 50 monthly prayer cards to those she meets with at their request, with another 25 on the postal mailing list. Both these resources are provided by Caraway.

She has recruited up to 20 volunteers to run the groups, and 3 to help with telephone calls and home visits. Special times of the year have been celebrated such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter and some community events such as a memorial to those who died in the Covid pandemic, the death of the Queen and the coronation of the new King. Families living with dementia have been welcomed and enjoyed reminiscence and singing sessions, as well as receiving advice and support from visiting health professionals.

The Chaplain and volunteers have visited and prayed over 6 of the supported housing blocks, have held an annual Carol Service, seen individuals and shared coffee mornings with the residents.



Outcomes:

- Older people in Lordshill and Maybush know there is a Chaplain they can call on if they are distressed and at times of change and loss.
- 150 per month receive spiritual resources that help them stay connected to the community and church.
- Up to 40 people a week come to a group to meet friends and make new ones and to share activities such as craft and music.
- Churches in the area have a higher regard for older people and take advice from the Chaplain.
- Up to 20 volunteers, many from the community, help others on a regular basis and have been trained to offer compassionate support.
- Lord'd Hill Church has been well supported by the Chaplain during the time they had no minister.
- Inclusion, care and non judgmental attitudes are modelled in the community.

CHURCH

People come to a sense of peace when in the groups, when seen individually and in talking about and praying about their problems and situations. The volunteers listen well and everyone feels valued and loved that day.

Carer coming to social group with husband who has dementia said: "I'm not religious as you know but when I come here, it's like being hugged - I can't quite explain it!"

Inclusion and Acceptance

The Chaplain is for people of all backgrounds, culture and disabilities. The groups that run in Lord's Hill and Maybush include people of any faith, of no faith and those who are exploring faith and people who usually feel excluded or ignored feel valued in these groups.

A recovering alcoholic has been included and reached out to, "I am finding answers in the Bible the Church gave me, and whenever I pass this church, I pause and give thanks. Thursday Coffee, Cake & Connect is very important to me and I will not make any other appointments for that day".

Prayer

You cannot overestimate the benefit of listening to someone's situation and praying sensitively about it with them. Being able to help them reconnect with their previous faith at a time when they are no longer able to enjoy being part of a faith group or church touches their heart greatly. Reconciliation within a family is made possible, and forgiveness for things that have passed is received.

Right time right place... "Oh Lord, thank you for sending Margaret just when I needed her. Thank you for answering my prayer." Said a lady who was feeling very unwell

DEVELOPING TEAM

This work is so important it must grow and Margaret has worked to recruit 3 Chaplain's assistants, who receive training from Caraway, and other volunteers to run the groups and keep in touch with referred people.

Helping people make new friends, and building communities is building for the future. Encouraging other churches to value their older people, by role modelling is effective.

On a phone call to F in a care home. I prayed on the phone and he cried as he still misses his wife and is worried about his mental state, so we prayed for peace. "You have become very important to me." He said.

HOPE Changing expectations, from negative / stereotyped to positive hope,

MH said, I am visiting several housebound Christians, feeling cut off from their fellowships. I help them reconnect to the throne of God's grace. It makes them feel valued, even though their own church has lost contact with them. "I didn't know you were a Reverend", one said, "What a privilege that you should visit me!" But it is my privilege to provide spiritual support in this last stage of her life, especially as on more than one occasion the person prayed for has then prayed God's blessing on me!

CARE

Lord's Hill and Maybush are places of high need and many people in the 900 older persons flats are new to the area. Linking in with these housing blocks has always been high priority but difficult due to the pandemic and all the changes it caused socially, then and now. People are more isolated and lonely, they lack love and value, are not connected up and often have no local family or anyone who cares.

Our teams started praying around each block and opportunities have opened up to get to know residents and enter into their world.

The big 5 sheltered housing blocks in the area will soon have dedicated volunteers who will have more opportunity to get to know more of the residents, to look out for people referred to a Chaplain, to help with home visits and try to listen to them and provide advice and support for their problems. Relationships have also been built with City Council workers, and housing support officers.

Outcomes:

Potters Court Deliver 12 Vintage Adventure @ Home booklets, Tuesdays Together has been running for 2 years and now has a monthly memory café and weekly drop in. Approx. 20 people per week at group.

Margaret was very involved with the opening of Potters Court in July 2021, a 98 flat complex of people with complex needs, and every flat received a welcome gift and an invitation to a weekly drop in session. Many came and made new friends, enjoyed music, bingo and craft activities with the collaborative team of Margaret, her volunteers, the local church and NHS activity coordinators. A memory café for Maybush has now also been established in Potters Court and is thriving. Creating community has definitely occurred.

Coffee Cake and Connect at Lord's Hill Church approx 20 attendees every week.

Sunday services in 2 blocks monthly 20 at each service (This is run by Lord's Hill Church - so perhaps not relevant? - also only ¾ attend at one location)

Rozel Court We meet 15 to 20 people at the coffee morning on Tuesdays and 8 to 10 at **Sarnia Court** coffee mornings also held on Tuesdays. We visit once a month.

At **Neptune Court** Ann, a member of the local Church, runs Chatterbox, which is a Knit and natter. However only 2 to 3 ladies attend post covid and Ann has dementia. We support once a month.

Some of the blocks are having difficulty coping with change in Council carers, from Allied to Apex. Many young carers fare from a variety of ethnic origin now and there is poor communication and racism.

M and J, her assistant (who is African) visited a lady who didn't come to the usual coffee morning at a sheltered housing block. L said she was frightened to go out after a racially motivated abuse has reminded her of previous bad memories. J prayed with her and agreed to telephone her for ongoing support. "Yes please," she said, "I have been asking God for a black friend."

Now ongoing work in that block to break down the racial prejudice that has arisen by a new Council led care provision made up of carers of all sorts of cultural background, all very

COMMUNITY

Weekly social groups set up in 2020 have allowed much community engagement. One group was as the complex was opened and the residents of 98 flats met through our group to get to know their new neighbours. The group continued and now has a memory cafe session monthly. Many individuals have been visited and helped for distress, depression, bereavement, and end of life support.

We take referrals for older people, from Admiral nurses, social prescribers, memory cafes, churches, and friends and family.

Telephone support is given on an ongoing basis with some over an extended period of time. This support can be for a variety of reasons such as bereavement, racial abuse, or an aggressive dominating husband, encouraging where possible for the person to link up with an appropriate support group as well.

Special celebrations or commemorations are arranged for Christmas, Easter, to remember those who died, and fun holiday at home days in the summer.



Bereavement support: When a resident died, a daughter of one resident wrote "Mum enjoyed the Tuesdays Together sessions, especially the spiritual part, and she said you affirmed her faith. "One day Margaret visited, and her daughter said " you were to me one of life's earth angels. I will never forget the calm you brought me and I learned from you how I could help another lady. May God give you strength to continue your marvellous work as a chaplain."

Dementia friendly sessions twice a month for singing or reminiscence are popular, and a collaboration with the MAST Theatre group in Southampton brought a Buddy Holly workshop. One of our group, who has dementia, used to sing in a night club, and sang "That'll be the day" on his own with accompaniment. He was chuffed and felt valued.



J, from the social group, whose husband has dementia, enjoys teaching another attendee how to sew a skirt during one of our sessions.

Story of reconciliation.

S, Chaplain's assistant who had listened to M, helped her write a letter to her estranged sister saying she would like to meet up. Some week's later they did meet up. They didn't talk for long but M went home so very happy. As she left she said to her sister "I love you" and that night went to sleep not crying as she usually did as she has now met her sister again.

RESOURCES

Anna Chaplain Supervision Group

Margaret meets with the 9 Anna Chaplains across the city and has individual supervision with Chaplain leads.

Vintage Adventure @ Home

Caraway produces a themed monthly spiritual pack for housebound older people and for carers to use in care home settings. It contains stories, hymns, prayers, readings and reflections as well as puzzles, colouring, and community stories.

Craft projects and themed stories are used at the social groups and are very popular.



Monthly Prayer Cards

Caraway produces a monthly themed prayer card which helps carers and families and housebound to pray together or alone.

Delivered or posted in Lordshill and Maybush to 89 households. All available for free download via the website: www.caraway.uk.com



Annual Holiday @ Home event, themed to a cultural experience, we did New Zealand in 2023 and this event is open to the community.

Southampton MAST Theatre brings shared sessions to the social groups.

*Helping the bereaved. V and D who run the bereavement group in a local church said:
“A personal thank you from us and our group for the prayer cards and Vintage
Adventure packs from Caraway that we receive every month. Please keep this going as
all prayers and literature from Caraway is awaited with great thanks.”*

VISION

1. Working with church and community partnerships to expand the reach of spiritual services to more of the 900 older people living in flats in Lord's Hill.
2. Find or develop Christian Resources for Learning Disabled, low IQ and illiterate. Eg Comic strip, V, (Manston Court is her mission field) C, N.
3. Recruiting for 2 volunteers per housing block, to : pray around, visit, encourage community, eg Christmas cards in The Big 5...Erskine, Manston, Neptune, Rozel, and Sarnia Courts.
4. Engage with Caraway's Dementia support by supporting families living with dementia in the area. This could be with more volunteers offering telephone support, or other ways.....
5. Leadership. Team development to empower and enlarge an effective team in Lord's Hill and Maybush including new opportunities for intergenerational connections, linking with churches, hospital chaplains, care agencies, all to expand effectiveness.

Feedback from Church Member from Lord's Hill Church:

"Margaret, each time I've sought your wise counsel, you have listened to my concerns, not judged or criticised me but responded with appropriate scripture with your usual calm, very positive way. It has allowed me NOT to feel depressed, angry or desperate, only wiser, hopeful and praising God for using you at a time when I have felt very much alone. You always 'open up' the scripture and offer it into my situation. It stabilises me; confirms the direction I should take and encourages me greatly. I am privileged to know you and to have access to you, especially when I come to a hard place and cannot see the wood for the trees! May Father God continue to bless you richly.

Feedback from Erica Roberts, City Chaplain:

It has been an exciting journey watching this work develop in Lord's Hill over the past few years. A small, dedicated team has grown, who are committed to resourcing the spiritual well-being of the older person in the community. Perhaps the most telling outcome is the growing trust that has been built between the various supported housing managers, other partners, such as the local church, NHS Admiral Nurses, Care Organisations, and of course, many of the older people. I look forward to seeing what the future holds as we build on this foundation now in place.

Feedback from Lord's Hill Church Leader:

"Our Chaplain, Margaret has a strong faith and an amazing stamina and has formed excellent relationships with many of our older members of the community. She is always mentioned by people living in the supported housing blocks we visit as a trusted, reliable person who will pray with them, as she cares deeply about their spiritual well-being. People attending the social groups receive spiritual refreshment and an experience of the love of Jesus demonstrated through the compassion of Margaret and her volunteers. She is a fount of knowledge about other areas of support, provides excellent resources and supports people in hospital as needed.

Margaret has been a rock for people to lean on and we really value her input. I wish we could have another Margaret as we could reach so many more people. "