



Village & Community Agents

Year 5

April to June 2011

Providing older
people with easier
access to services and
information

Report produced by
Gloucestershire Rural
Community Council



GLOUCESTERSHIRE VILLAGE & COMMUNITY AGENTS

BACKGROUND

The Village Agents Project began as a pilot scheme funded by the Department of Work and Pensions (LinkAge Plus) in 2006 with the aim of providing older people in Gloucestershire's rural communities with easier access to information and services. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) employed and managed the Village Agent team enjoying a successful partnership with Gloucestershire County Council.

In 2007 Community Agents were introduced to work with the BME Communities across the county, funded and managed by Gloucestershire County Council. After the initial pilot stage, in June 2008 Gloucestershire Village and Community Agents were mainstreamed as a service, with funding jointly provided by Gloucestershire County Council and NHS Gloucestershire. Village Agents have been managed by GRCC from the outset and in 2010 Community Agents became part of that team. Currently all 32 agents are employed and managed at GRCC, with the partnership between the funding agencies continuing.

A steering group made up of key stakeholders has been put in place and the scheme managers report directly on a quarterly basis to the group. Processes that were used to report to the Department for Work and Pensions continue, collating demographic and numerical data using the existing gateway forms, with case studies and diaries providing anecdotal evidence.

The success of the Village Agents project in Gloucestershire has gained a great deal of interest nationally, and other areas across the country are now running their own projects. Essex and Cumbria both launched their pilot projects in 2009, while Warwickshire and Bedfordshire launched pilot projects early in 2010 and Hampshire and Cheshire in 2011. Wiltshire is currently finalising proposals for its own project while interest has been expressed by Derbyshire, Cornwall, the Scottish Highlands, Carmarthenshire, Denbighshire Herefordshire, Somerset and many other places around the United Kingdom.

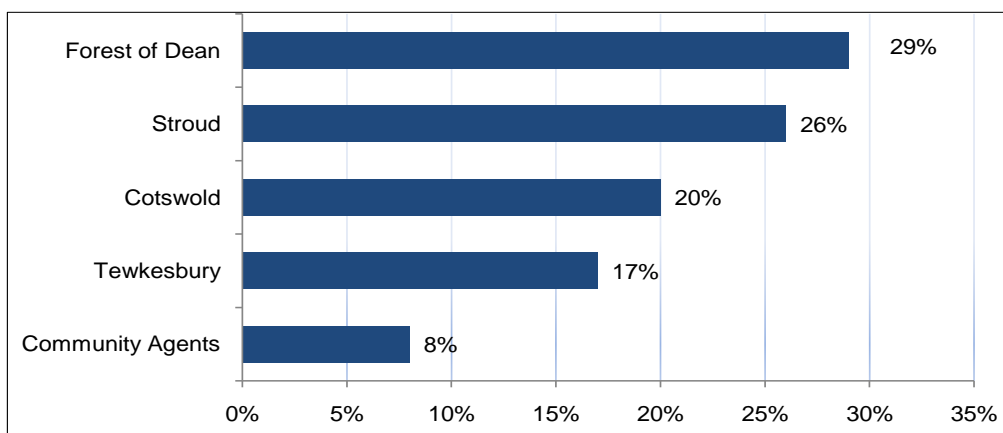
This report looks at the referrals that Village and Community Agents have made from April to June 2011. Breaking down the statistics by District, Age Group and by issue the report can be used to inform local decision making using statistics collected directly from older people on the ground. Please note that some of the issues that arise during a Village or Community Agent visit does not always result in a referral being made to an actual agency, however an Agent is still required to fill in a 'gateway referral' form, this is often anonymous and collects details relating to the issue in question and the action taken.

1.0 GATEWAY/REFERRALS

APRIL TO JUNE 2011

After each visit a Village or Community Agent makes, they are required to fill in an online referral, or 'gateway' form. The form collects demographic data, the nature of the problem, and other information relevant to any follow up visit. The gateway form is then submitted to the required agency by the Village or Community Agent for the query to be addressed.

From April to June 2011 a total of 998 gateway forms were submitted by Village and Community Agents. A percentage breakdown by area is shown below.

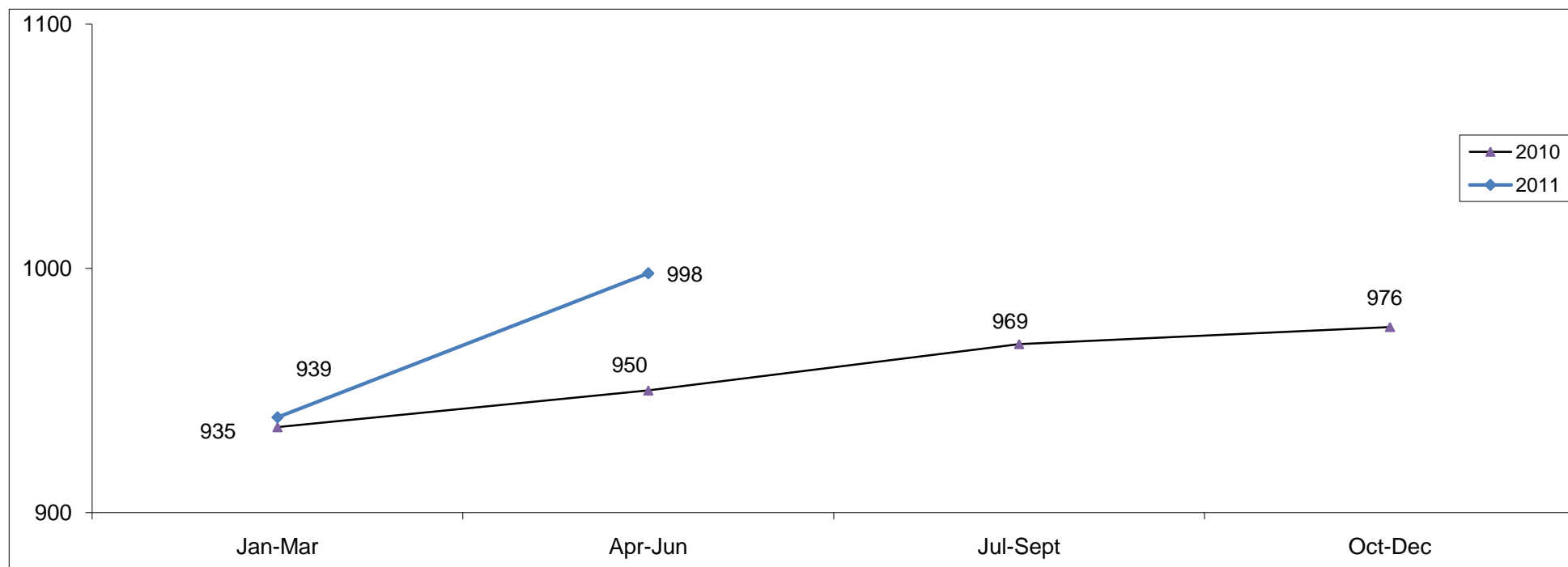


The area breakdown can vary by month and by quarter; From April 1st 2011 until 30th June 2011 the Forest of Dean District Village Agents made 29% of the referrals for the quarter and Stroud District accounted for over a quarter (26%) of all referrals, followed by the Cotswold Village Agents who submitted a fifth of referrals (20%). Community Agents working with the Black and Minority Ethnic communities submitted 8% of referrals.



1.1 Village & Community Agent Gateways

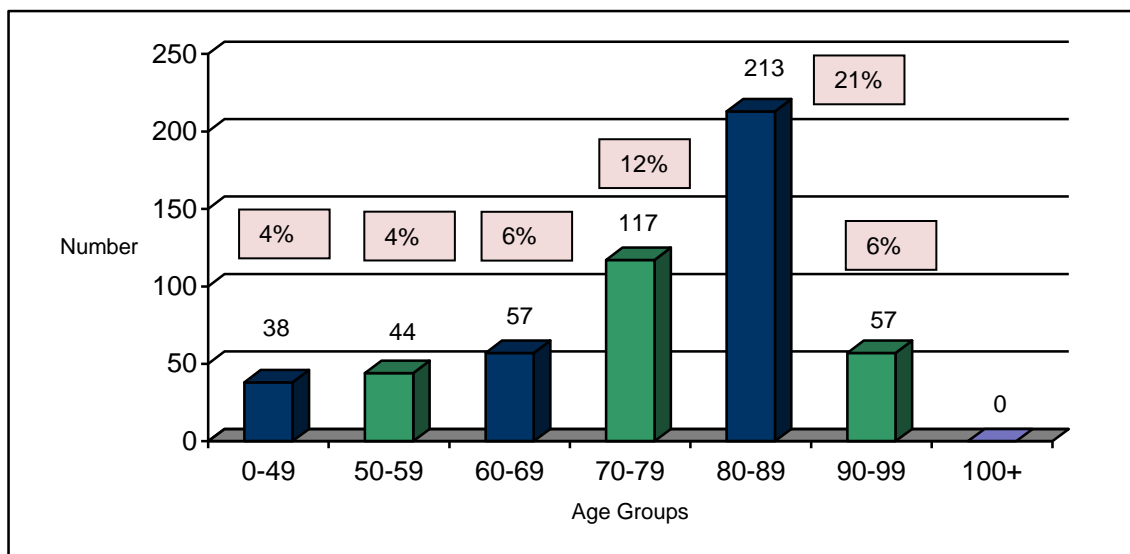
The number of gateway forms submitted by Village and Community Agent rose steadily in 2010. 2011 gateways have begun with a similar pattern, with a slight increase on the first few months and rising again into the spring and summer. The increase seen in the months April to June 2011 compared to the first few months of the year and compared to the same few months of 2010 is notable. It would be expected throughout the year that referrals will rise and continue to follow a similar pattern to 2010.



1.2 Gateways by Age Group

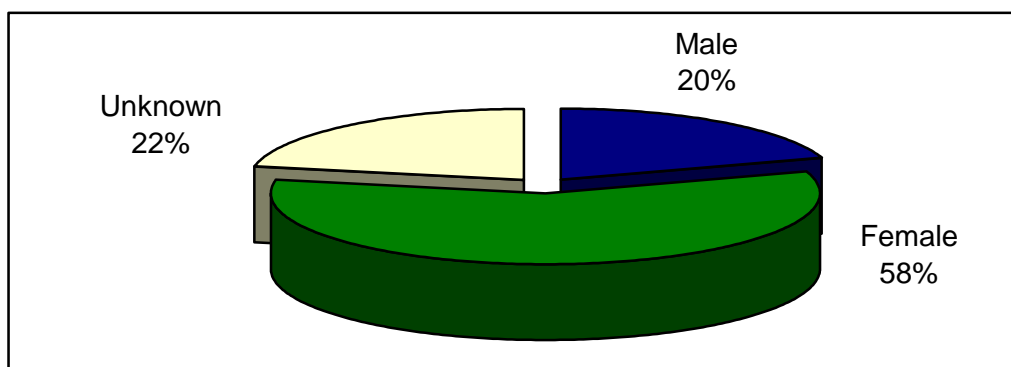
The majority of gateway forms submitted by Village and Community Agents in Gloucestershire were for clients who were aged between 80 and 89 years old (213 referrals, 21% of all gateway forms submitted), followed by 12% who were between the ages of 70 and 79. A small proportion (4%) of gateway forms submitted were for people who are under the age of 50, the majority of these referrals were made by Community Agents (see separate analysis).

There was a large proportion of referrals made where an age was not specified, this can be attributed to gateway forms being submitted anonymously and to people not wanting to disclose their age or date of birth.



1.3 Gateways by Gender

Over half (58%) of clients seen by Village and Community Agents between the months of April and June 2011 were female.



COTSWOLD DISTRICT

Village Agents in the Cotswold District submitted 201 'gateway' forms from 1st April 2011 to 30th June 2011.

- Of those referrals requiring further action from an agency (121) **Referrals to the pensions service dominated (29%) followed by referrals to the Adult and Social Care Helpdesk (20%)**. Other referrals were made to Gloucestershire Careline, Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service, Age UK, SWEA, Gloucestershire County Association for the Blind and Mears Group for home improvement.
- There were also gateway forms submitted by Village Agents in the Cotswold District that required a Village Agent to support the client by signposting to local services such as the parish councils and local community groups. Some clients required assistance with issues such as Blue Badge forms and gateway forms were submitted for general support and checking to see if previous clients were managing. The North Cotswold Volunteer Centre and People for You befriending scheme in the South Cotswolds were also used on a number of occasions.

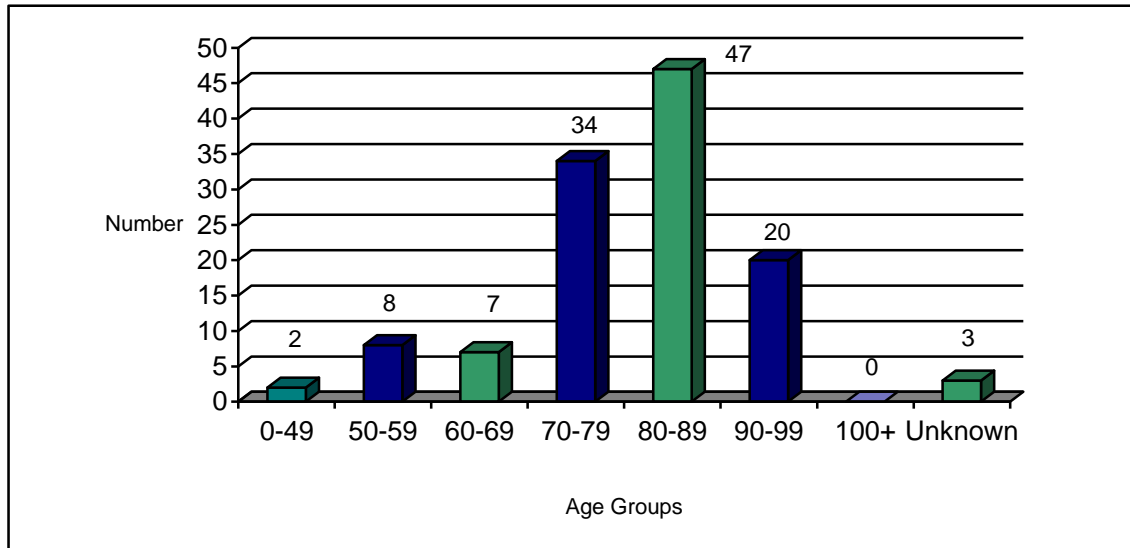
A number of gateway forms (80) were submitted that did not require further action from an agency. Information (phone numbers/leaflets etc) was provided by Cotswold Village Agents to their clients or communities in the following areas:

Issue	Apr-Jun	Jan-Mar	Information Specifically Relating to:
Health	17%	15%	<i>Dementia Care Gloucestershire Deaf Association Message in a Bottle Distribution Prescription Delivery Services for the area</i>
Support	15%	-	<i>General chat about needs Enquiries made about: Phone bills, Heating bills Oil heating</i>
Community	14%	5%	<i>Meetings with key local contacts Attendance at parish council meetings Liaison with parish magazine editors</i>
Transport	11%	-	<i>Most enquiries relating to the public consultations run by Gloucestershire County Council</i>
Social/Leisure	10%	11%	<i>Lunch club information Holiday arrangements – support with Lonely clients wanting information about day centres</i>
Caring	5%	-	
Benefits	5%	13%	
Social Care	5%	7%	
PCSO/Security	5%	-	<i>Cold Calling and security issues</i>
Digital Switchover	4%	-	
District Council	3%	-	<i>Recycling enquiries</i>
Housing	3%	15%	
Volunteering	1%	4%	
Other	2%	30%	

Please note that 'other' had been categorised differently to last quarter and broken down further to give a clearer picture of issues that have arisen.

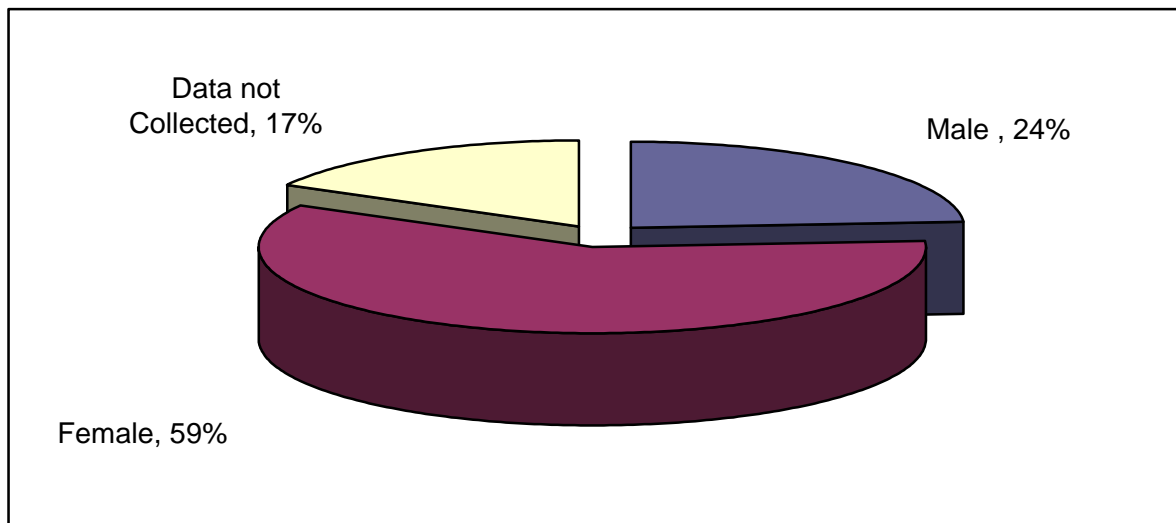
Referrals by Age Group – Cotswold District

The majority of referrals made by Village Agents in the Cotswold District were for clients who were aged between 80 and 89 years old (47 referrals). This breakdown is based on the 121 referrals made to agencies that required further action and were happy to disclose their date of birth or age.



Referrals by Gender – Cotswold District

The chart below shows the number of referrals broken down by gender; over half of clients seen by Village Agents in the Cotswolds were female. However, almost a quarter were male; this is higher than the 20% recorded for the county as a whole.



STROUD DISTRICT

Village Agents in the Stroud District submitted 268 'gateway' forms from 1st April 2011 to 30th June 2011.

Of those referrals requiring further action from an agency (186) **15% of referrals made in the Stroud District were made to the Adult and Social Care Helpdesk, for OT Assessments, bathing equipment, direct payment queries and grab rails.** 8% of Stroud referrals were made to Age UK. Other referrals this quarter were made to the DWP Benefits Team, SWEA, Care and Repair Stroud, Gloucestershire County Council and the PCSO team.

A number of gateway forms (82) were submitted that did not require further action from an agency. Information/support was provided by Stroud Village Agents to their clients or communities in the following areas:

Issue	Apr-Jun	Jan-Mar	Information Specifically Relating to:
General Support	22%	-	See extracts overleaf
Health	26%	21%	Actively advertising and helping clients access balance and stamina workshops Prescription Delivery Services Hearing Aid enquiries Depression Podiatry
Social/Leisure	15%	5%	Encouraging and supporting clients to access local clubs
Council Services	11%	5%	Personal identity card enquiries Planning issues Parish Council Meetings
Transport	5%	10%	Volunteer car scheme enquiries
Social Care	5%	6%	Help to change appointment with sensory team Help to obtain a Care home Directory Call from Adult and Social Care Team to go and see a lady who had been discharged from hospital
Caring	3%	3%	
Community Groups	3%	8%	
PCSO/Security	2%	-	Concerns raised about cold callers in the area
Other	8%	32%	Client referred to Stroud CAB with concerns about a large tax bill Client looking for a charity who would like a double oven Census 2011

Please note that 'other' had been categorised differently to last quarter and broken down further to give a clearer picture of issues that have arisen.

Just over a fifth (22%) of enquiries in Stroud were categorised as general support, The extracts below and overleaf give a flavour of the queries that Village and Community Agents are presented with, and the varying ways in which they are able to deal with such issues.

"Mr O had a stroke last year followed by a series of mini ones. He gets very depressed. He is lonely and has some problems with mobility but he likes to be useful and help people. Contacted the Stroke Association who are going to take him to two of their clubs in Painswick and Beeches Green, Stroud"

Continued.....

“A lady phoned me to ask if I knew any company that repaired walking sticks. I assumed it was for her mother. I contacted Guide and went on their website to find firm called Assured Mobility in Stroud. I passed this information on”

“Mrs M is very socially isolated and I am one of the very few people she will talk to. She asked me to visit to help her write out her telephone bill and to change her clocks.”

“Mrs B has mistakenly watered her lawn with weed killer and because there has been no rain she has killed all the grass. She had a gardener from Care and Repair last year but she hadn't made a note of who it was who came. I gave her a copy of last year's list to see if she could remember, otherwise she will ring someone else on the list to lay new turf.”

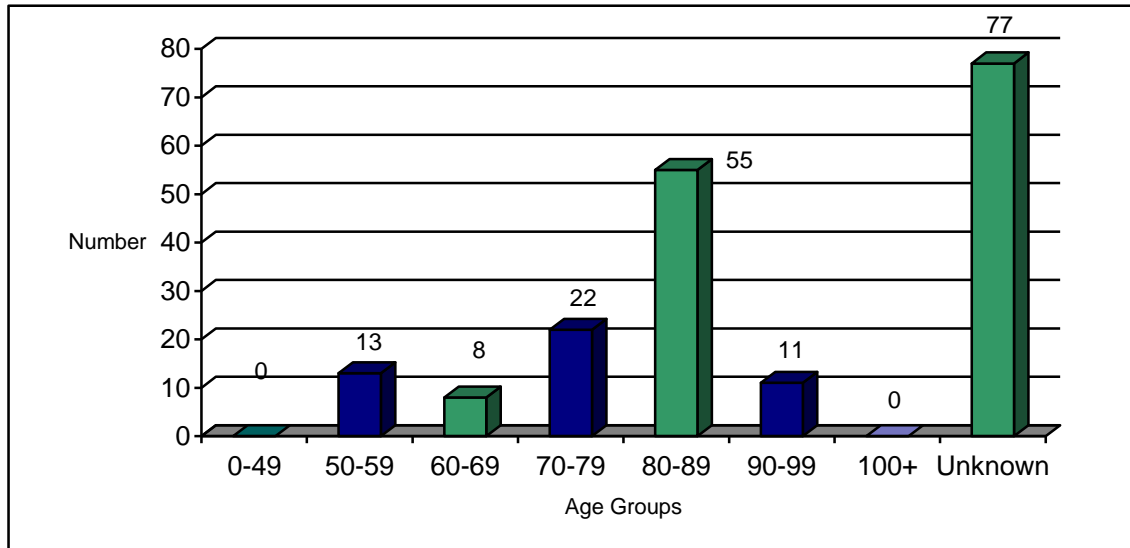
“Mr R gets lonely following the death of his wife and needs support. He is a very keen gardener and enters exhibits for the local show every year but will not join many social events as he feels outnumbered by too many women!”

I was passing Mrs B's house the previous evening and noticed that thick 'fummy' dark smoke was coming from the chimney. Made a home visit today to check all was well. Mrs B will get her son to clean the chimney. Her TV needed retuning; 3 neighbours had tried unsuccessfully. I retuned it!! Was still waiting for quotes back from builder re her bathroom; was getting very anxious. I called builder; he will visit May 24th to do full spec and can start work from May 30th

Mrs R is very socially isolated and vulnerable. She has no family /neighbour or friend support. She suffers from a variety of health problems, is unsteady on her feet and is extremely anxious. We are in the process of having a CareLine + Keysafe, + help from Helping Hands to assist her paperwork and general sorting.

Referrals by Age Group – Stroud District

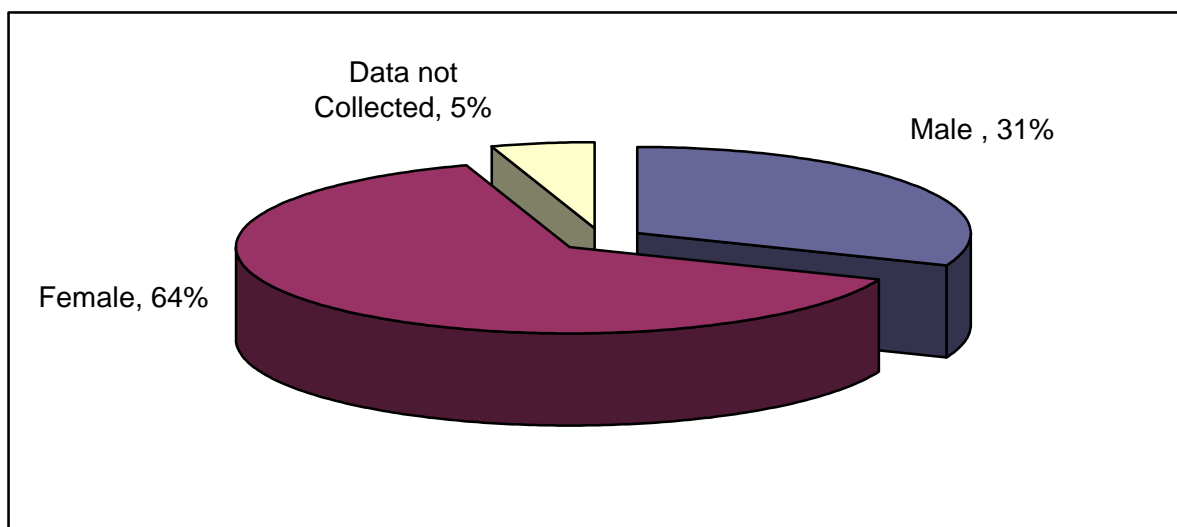
The majority of referrals made by Village Agents in the Stroud District were for clients who were aged between 80 and 89 years old (55 referrals). This breakdown is based on the 186 referrals made to agencies that required further action and were happy to disclose their date of birth or age.



The chart below shows the number of referrals in each age category in percentage terms. 42% of referrals made by Village Agents in Stroud District were made for clients in the 80-89 age group.

Referrals by Gender – Stroud District

The chart below shows the number of referrals broken down by gender; almost two thirds of clients referred by Village Agents in the Stroud were female. However, almost a third were male, this is higher than the 20% recorded for the county as a whole.



TEWKESBURY BOROUGH

Village Agents in the Tewkesbury Borough submitted 164 'gateway' forms from 1st April 2011 to 30th June 2011.

Of those referrals requiring further action from an agency (84) **17% of referrals made in the Tewkesbury Borough were made to the Adult and Social Care Helpdesk, for OT Assessments, bathing equipment and grab rails.** 17% of Tewkesbury referrals were also made to Age UK for form filling, benefit checks and general support for clients. Other referrals this quarter were made to the DWP Benefits Team, SWEA, and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue.

A number of gateway forms (80) were submitted that did not require further action from an agency. Information/support was provided by Tewkesbury Village Agents to their clients or communities in the following areas:

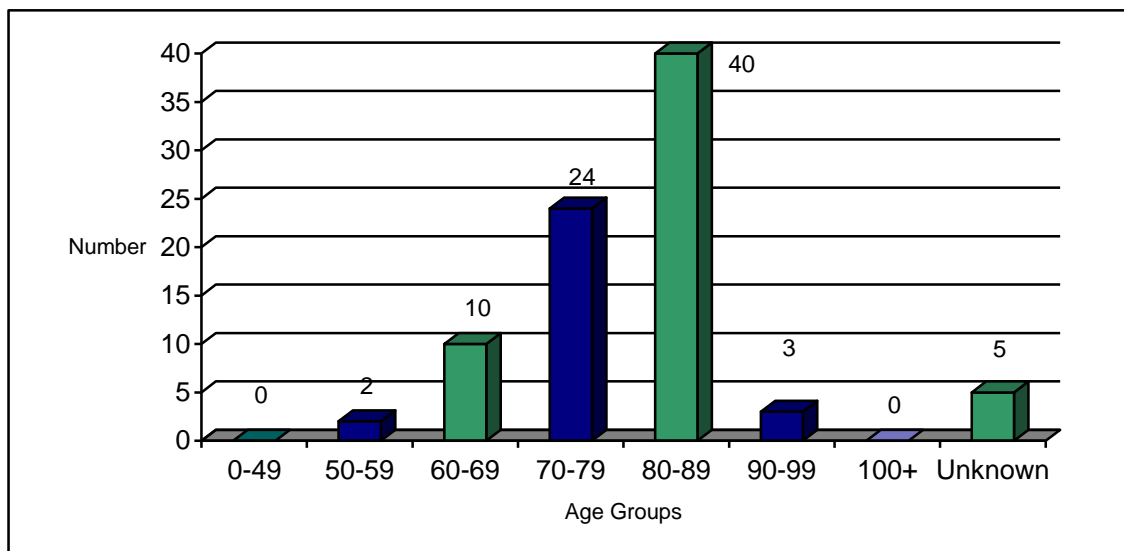
Issue	Apr-Jun	Jan-Mar	Information Specifically Relating to:
Digital Switchover	23%	-	<i>Retuning following switchover Follow up calls to help scheme</i>
Social/Leisure	14%	24%	<i>Calls to clients about the Pheasant 'Pub Club' Local Coffee mornings and clubs researched for client Attendance at local clubs</i>
Health	10%	20%	<i>Support calls to ill clients checking that they are managing Mobility Issues</i>
Support Group/Charity	10%	4%	<i>Signposted clients to GCAB and clubs Information given re Lip Reading classes Signposted clients to Gloucestershire Deaf Association British Red Cross services researched Barnwood House Trust contacted</i>
PCSO/Security	6%	-	<i>Cold Calling issues Security Matters</i>
Social Care	4%	-	<i>Mobility issues Domiciliary Care issues</i>
Transport	5%	2%	<i>Information given about the local village minibus GCC Transport review Details passed on about volunteer driver services</i>
Community Groups	3%	4%	-
Housing	3%	2%	-
Census 2011	3%	-	-
Other	19%	40%	<i>Client enquiry as to where to donate unwanted toys Client wanted stair lift removed Queries about passport Support for client recently bereaved</i>

Please note that 'other' had been categorised differently to last quarter and broken down further to give a clearer picture of issues that have arisen.

Referrals by Age Group – Tewkesbury Borough

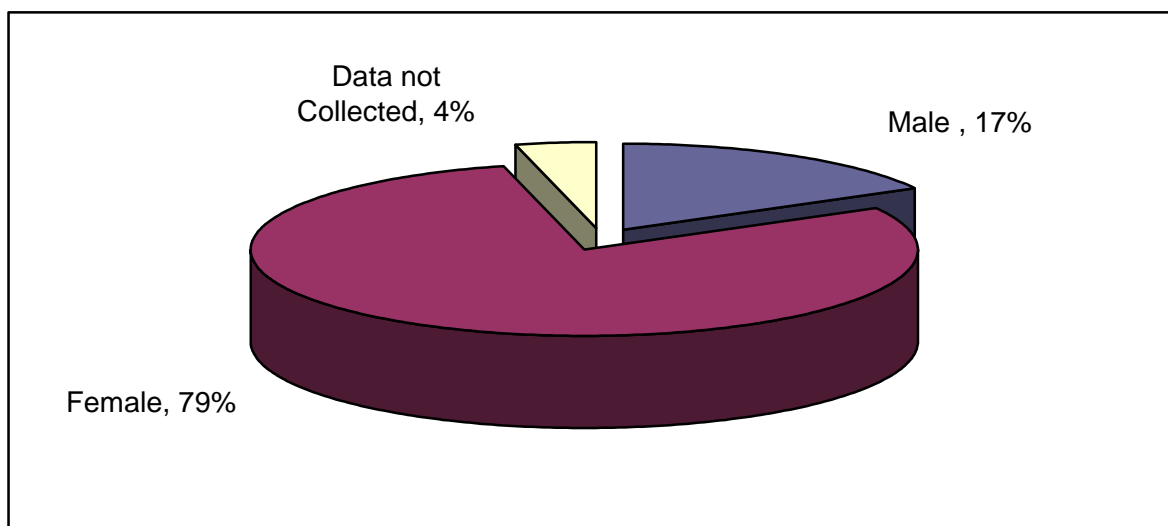
The majority of referrals made by Village Agents in the Tewkesbury Borough were for clients who were aged between 80 and 89 years old (40 referrals).

Please note that this breakdown is related to the 84 referrals made to agencies.



Referrals by Gender – Tewkesbury Borough

The chart below shows the number of referrals broken down by gender; the majority of clients referred by Village Agents in the Tewkesbury were female. Only 17% of clients referred on to agencies in Tewkesbury Borough were male, lower than the 20% recorded for the county as a whole.



FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT

Village Agents in the Forest of Dean District submitted 278 'gateway' forms from 1st April 2011 to 30th June 2011.

Of those referrals requiring further action from an agency (92) **25% of referrals made in the Forest of Dean were made to the Adult and Social Care Helpdesk, for OT Assessments, grab rails and sensory team referrals.** 21% of Forest of Dean referrals were made to Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue for smoke alarms, and home safety checks. Other referrals this quarter were made to the DWP Benefits Team and Age UK.

A large number of gateway forms (186) were submitted that did not require further action from an agency. Information/support was provided by Forest of Dean Village Agents to their clients or communities in the following areas:

Issue	Apr-Jun	Jan-Mar	Information Specifically Relating to:
Transport	16%	5%	Gloucestershire County Council Bus Consultation Patient transport to hospital Concessionary Bus pass enquiries Bus and Rail timetables
Social/Leisure	13%	14%	Activities in communities Local lunch clubs Attendance at coffee mornings and clubs Liaison with In Touch at GRCC
Social Care	12%	35%	Blue Badges Direct signposting to Adult Helpdesk Information provided re Your Circle Mobility problems
Benefits	6%	8%	
Health	7%	4%	Message in a Bottle distribution Signposting to Health Walks GP Exercise Prescription enquiry
Council Services	7%	3%	Recycling and refuse services Environmental Health Department
Security	6%	-	Street Warden, PCSO and cold calling signposting
Community	4%	2%	Parish Council Meetings
Info re Power of Attorney/Wills	3%	-	
Citizens Advice	2%	-	
Charity/Support Groups	2%	1%	Signposting to the Red Cross Lydcare for gardening and home aids
Volunteering	1%	1%	
<i>Other/General Support</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>See below</i>

Please note that 'other' had been categorised differently to last quarter and broken down further to give a clearer picture of issues that have arisen.

Just over a fifth (21%) of enquiries in the Forest of Dean were categorised as other/general support, the extracts overleaf give a flavour of the queries that Village and Community Agents are presented with, and the varying ways in which they are able to deal with such issues.

"Visit to weekly to coffee morning at the Community Centre. About 15 members present. Mentioned digital switchover, although no one present received TV via Ridgehill, one lady stated she has been having problems with receiving BBC1 since the Mendip switchover last year. I have given her my contact details for her to phone me if she wishes for me to visit and try and help. Also suggested she or her son telephones the BBC helpline for assistance. I mentioned advice to fit exterior door security chains to rear doors as well as front doors. 2 Rivers fit chains to front doors, advised to contact 2 rivers to ask for chains to be fitted to rear doors as well. Information re. home security given to each member. Advised that police sell door chains, if required for £5 each. Mentioned about local elections and referendum, now too late for postal vote applications, but explained to members about the referendum. Talk was very well received by members."

"A client asked who to contact with a query about credit cards these were dealt with by her husband who has recently died. I suggested she contact her back and offered further assistance if she felt she needed it."

"One of the hospital Adult Social Care workers phoned me as they were keeping an elderly gentleman in hospital (overnight initially) but his dog was on its own at home in a crate. She wanted to know who to contact as someone needed to be able to go into the house legally and see to the dog. I gave her a couple of suggestions and then rang her back with a few more which she was following up."

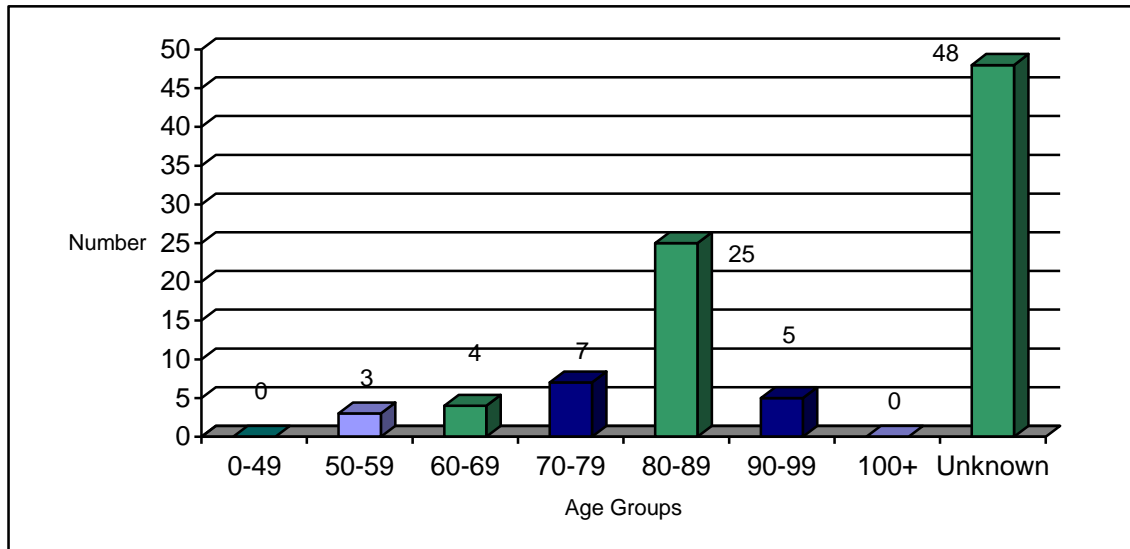
"Sourced stockist for particular food item person was having trouble obtaining"

"Supplied client with guide to retirement booklet"

Referrals by Age Group – Forest of Dean District

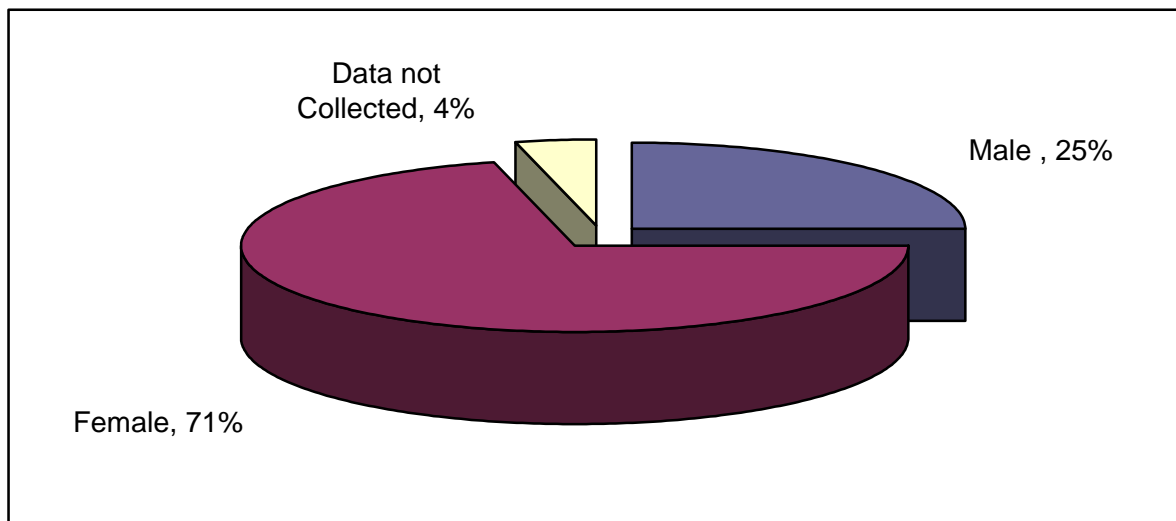
Unfortunately, it was not known into what age group the large majority of referrals made by Village Agents in the Forest of Dean District fell into. Out of those clients who were happy to disclose their age, 25 were between the ages of 80 and 89

Please note that this breakdown is related to the 92 referrals made to agencies.



Referrals by Gender – Forest of Dean

The chart below shows the number of referrals broken down by gender; the majority of clients referred by Village Agents in the Forest of Dean were female. 25% of clients referred on to agencies were male, higher than the 20% recorded for the county as a whole.



COMMUNITY AGENTS

Community Agents in Gloucestershire submitted 87 'gateway' forms from 1st April 2011 to 30th June 2011.

Referrals made directly to agencies in Gloucestershire that required action to be taken totalled 27, an increase of 17 on the previous quarter. **41% of referrals were made to the Gloucestershire County Council Adult and Social Care Helpdesk** for OT assessments, to overcome mobility problems. Further referrals were made to Age UK, DWP for benefits advice and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue.

A large number of gateway forms (60) were submitted that did not require further action from an agency. Information/support was provided by the Community Agents to their clients or communities in the following areas:

Issue	Apr-Jun	Jan-Mar	Information Specifically Relating to:
Housing	15%	30%	Research relating to Homeseekers Communicating with client and landlord because of language difficulties
Health	13%	9%	Met with 2Gether Trust to establish links with Chinese Community Assisted client at hospital because of language barrier Arranged interpreter for visit to GP
Social/Leisure	10%	7%	Information given re local clubs Liaison with GRCC In Touch project
Digital Switchover	10%	-	Signposting to the Helpscheme Retuning TV's after switchover
Community Groups	7%	-	
Benefits	7%	11%	
Census 2011	5%	-	
Social Care	5%	2%	OT Assessments Signposting to Adult Help Desk
Support Groups/Charity	5%	4%	Signposting to Chinese Resource Centre
Transport	2%	4%	Dial a Ride information
Volunteering	1%	7%	
Council Services	2%	-	
Other	18%	28%	

Please note that 'other' had been categorised differently to last quarter and broken down further to give a clearer picture of issues that have arisen.

Translation continues to be an issue for the Community Agents with many agencies depending on the team for interpreting skills. Translation is not part of the Community Agent role, however in order for them to carry out their remit effectively it has become necessary. This is particularly the case for the Polish and Chinese communities. This creates a number of issues for the Community Agents, time constraints being one, but there are also safeguarding concerns. Some examples of where a Community Agent has needed to translate are shown overleaf.

“Client has no hot water. Contacted the landlord and was told that they have no interpreter and will have to use me to communicate. Arranged workman for client and acting as interpreter on the phone for the case”

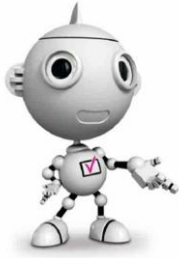
“Assisted client to hospital appointment due language barrier”

“The Forest of Dean District Council referred the client to me mainly due to the language barrier. The client and the partner are having rental arrears. Struggling as the client has been unemployed for over a year. Seeking for new, more affordable accommodation. On their behalf, I have requested a list of private tenants from the Housing Coleford to be sent to their home address. The client is already registered on the Home seeker waiting list. I have referred the client to GL Communities Face to Face Dept Advice. Also arranged the language line to be used.”

Village and Community Agents – April to June 2011

VILLAGE & COMMUNITY Agents

A new Village and Community Agent map is now available showing the 236 parishes that are covered across the county – since 2006 an additional 140 parishes have been added into the scheme. Two of the Community Agent team are now also Village Agents working in Churchdown and parishes in the Stroud District.



Agents in areas affected by the Central B region switching to digital TV were tasked with raising awareness amongst their communities and clients about the switch and equipping them with details of the Help Scheme available through the BBC.

Switchover is due to take place in September within the North Cotswolds and Agents will continue to support people who need access to the Help Scheme that is available.



3 Counties
Cancer Network

The team of 'specialist' Village and Community Agents continue to support patients, carers and family members affected by cancer. The team can work with anyone over the age of 18, anywhere in the county to signpost and help with access to information on a range of topics, including: employment, finance, social care, health and wellbeing, and transport, amongst others. There are 13 agents who have undertaken additional training. To find out who the specialist agents are please contact GRCC.

VILLAGE & COMMUNITY Agents

Village and Community Agents continue to draw interest from other counties interested in setting up their own schemes. This quarter Hampshire and Cheshire have both launched their respective schemes and have been to Gloucestershire to gather information and talk to our Agents. Further interest has been shown from other counties.

Mr K had been informed by his GP that he could have blood tests done at Glos Royal outside 9-5, Mon-Fri as he had difficulties using GP's facilities because of working away. Gp suggested he ask his Village Agent. Information found and passed on.

Mrs J was due to go into hospital last week for some tests. She was concerned about what the outcome might be so I went to see and talk to her. She has since told me that the results have been good so she is very relieved

Mrs W relies greatly on her local bus service. She was away for the first meeting in Stroud but she wants to comment about the planned changes. I gave her a consultation form which I got from Stroud Library.

“

For More Information about Village and Community Agents Contact:

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