



WINCANTON CARES: Benefits Officer Role – Background & Strategic Context

Our Mission: Connecting People with What They Need

Wincanton Cares was founded in 2022 in response to the closure of a Council-run care home and the resulting gap in local provision. A small group of committed residents came together to ensure that older people in the BA9 postcode area could continue to live full, independent lives with access to care, support, and information.

We work to reduce pressure on overstretched health and social care systems by identifying timely, cost-effective interventions rooted in community action. Our rural population faces multiple disadvantages: digital poverty, limited transport, and unequal access to services. We aim to close these gaps by building trust, improving access, and helping people stay well; physically, emotionally, and socially.

Our Strategy: 8 Volunteer-Led Strands

Wincanton Cares operates through a SMARTER Development, Delivery & Evaluation Plan:

Strand	Aim
1. Micro-Providers	Recruit, support, and retain local Micro-Providers
2. Digital Poverty	Partner to address barriers caused by technology, cost, and connectivity
3. Community Hubs	Use trusted venues to reach vulnerable residents and share information
4. Volunteering	Sustain a motivated volunteer base to deliver our vision
5. Ageing-Well Strategy	Work with partners to create a dementia-aware, age-friendly town
6. Unpaid Carers	Offer emotional support and practical advice to Unpaid carers
7. Emotional Health & Wellbeing	Map services, build partnerships, and promote activities
8. Communications	Deliver a multi-channel strategy that reaches digitally excluded residents

The Benefits Officer Role: Purpose & Potential

We are now looking to build on the work of our current postholder to further develop this vital role. You will also need to work closely with our Project Officer who acts as a Community Connector: bridging the gaps between individuals and the support, resources, and relationships available within our local area.

Aim: To support residents in the BA9 area to make successful benefit applications; empowering them to live well and bringing additional income into the local economy. We are exploring funding models to ensure this initiative becomes self-sustaining.

Why This Role Matters: Evidencing Need

- Many residents are unaware of entitlements like Attendance Allowance or Carers' Allowance
- People struggle to renew Blue Badges due to digital systems and AI-based assessments
- Some are reluctant to claim benefits but open up when trust is built
- Digital poverty prevents access to online forms and services
- Citizens Advice offers limited, appointment-only support. Residents want something more personal
- We offer home visits or support at a venue of choice, taking time to build relationships

Support Offered Includes:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Attendance Allowance
- Carers' Allowance
- Blue Badge applications
- Winter Fuel Allowance
- Local charities: Wincanton United Charities, CCS

Our Model: Embedded, Responsive, Collaborative

We don't have premises: we're rooted in the community through monthly hubs at:

- The Library, Health Centre, Community Hospital, Town Hall
- Veterans Association, ABRI Community Lounges, Morrisons Supermarket

We work with trusted partners including:

- Citizens Advice, Food Bank at Uncle Tom's, Balsam Centre, MHA, Thrive
- Dementia-friendly Communities, Parkinson's Society, Age UK, CAT Bus, Carers' Agent

We deliver newsletters to 500 homes, host support groups for Microproviders, and run craft sessions for carers, bereaved residents, and those in supported housing.

Our Ethos: Enhancing, Not Replicating

We listen to our community and shape our work around what they tell us they need. Our hubs are places of connection, not duplication; bringing together services where people already go, and making support visible, accessible, and human.



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