

What is a Community Connector?

Community Connectors (CC) are residents with **lived experience supporting residents from underserved population groups to connect with their community and access services.**

- Use **informal networks, local connections and knowledge** to reach people in workplaces, communities, neighbourhoods and local social hubs
- Have motivational and **strengths-based conversations**
- **Link with existing community groups** and organisations who are already embedded in the heart of the communities
- Increase **capability, opportunity and motivation**, to self-motivate to increase community participation
- Reach people who are **isolated and disconnected** from their community
- Help others to **access support**



What does a Community Connector do?

Here are some examples of ways the CC have supported resident to connect to services and their community:

- Supported a resident to **access domestic abuse support and a community art group** which is supporting their mental wellbeing.
- **Recognised the skills of residents** and supporting them to set up sessions such as growing food and reading in schools.
- Supported women where English is not their first language in **sharing their experience** as part of Doncaster's Fairness Commission
- Supported physical activity by setting up **private gym sessions for Muslim women and LGBTQ residents**
- Worked with Doncaster College students in **creating an educational comic about being hearing impaired.**

How do Community Connectors Work?

In 2021 Well Doncaster secured one year of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's to pilot a network of Covid-19 focused CC to increase vaccination uptake and counter infodemics in underserved groups.

Our model funded a network of Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) organisations with **existing connections to underserved groups to recruit and manage 10 CC**, fully embedding the CC in the community.

Further funding has been secured to continue the CC and currently have **15, paid CC role, hosted by 9 VCFS organisations.** The focus has shifted to **reconnecting residents with their community and supporting the impacts of the cost of living crisis.**

Case Studies

I am able to assist people further to access the wider community. A gentleman and his mother attended a group and he felt comfortable to disclose that his son was autistic and non-verbal. He felt isolated as he felt he could not take his son to groups as he had previously been judged. His son loves art. I was able to speak to the facilitator of Arty Farty and as they are all inclusive, they were more than happy for the gentleman and his son attend. They have now been attending on a weekly basis for months and thoroughly enjoy it.

Kathryn, Community Connector

I started in June 2021 as a Community Connector and it was all very new to me. I have had a lot of experience within the care sector, however, being a person with disabilities, this was a great way for me to expand my skills, knowledge and experience. So much about being a Community Connector and having a disability is listening and hearing individual stories and knowing that "I'm not alone" and that I can share my experience with them to show them that they are not alone too.

It is interesting to hear what residents in the community have been saying about their communities, their homes, their disabilities and many more areas where Doncaster could improve. Ever since I started this role, my confidence has improved and I am able to speak up more. I have made new connections which have given me a bigger picture perspective. As a Community Connector, I have learned so much and have gained so many new skills. My proudest moments are knowing and sharing the similar experiences of others.

Charlotte, Community Connector

