



Social Impact Report
2023-24







Contents

Chair's report	4
Year in numbers	6
Quality focus	7
Dementia and oversight	8
Gold standard for end-of-life care	9
Our people	10
Global leadership	12
Award-winning	13
Belong at Home is No.1	14
Spotlight on Belong Chester	16
Intergenerational benefits	17
Animal therapy	18
Wellbeing through exercise	19
Wellbeing through music	20
Wellbeing in nature	21
Community engagement	22
The future	23

Front cover image features Victor Langridge enjoying an Experience Day at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme; pictured in the Belong Heritage Gallery's Creative Studio making use of the potter's wheel, along with Experience Support Worker, Georgina Chell.

Chair's report



Social impact is fundamental to our vision for the future and it is a yardstick by which we measure the past, so it is always heartening to look back on the year that was and reflect on just how much positive change has been achieved.

As a not-for-profit organisation, Belong's vision is to redefine what's possible for older people, creating an outstanding environment that integrates services, housing and community in a continually improving and innovative care model - that is Belong villages.

This innovation has been nowhere more evident than in our newest location. Belong Chester, which celebrated its official opening in November 2023, is a blueprint for intergenerational living which brings purpose, joy and richness of experience to all members of the community.

Unique in having a children's nursery fully integrated under the same roof within the care village, this creates endless possibilities for planned and spontaneous interactions between young and old. Operated by our partners, the early years charity, Ready Generations, the Nursery in Belong is intentional in creating benefits for young and old alike. I am confident that just reading about its impact will bring smiles to the faces of many.

Beyond the addition of this intergenerational living setting to the Belong portfolio, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to innovate, evidence and advocate for the benefits of the Belong village model, and in particular the household living setting which is so transformative for care provision.



A significant moment in the past year was therefore the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding with care pioneers, Hammond Care in Australia and The Green House Project in the United States. We are excited that this international collaboration will see us work together to promote the benefits of the household model as a 24-hour care setting for older people, with the aim of making it available more widely across the globe.

Closer to home, we continue to see significant impact in the day-to-day milestones achieved in our villages. The increases in mobility and independence, in weight gained, new experiences attempted, exercise goals achieved and dreams come true. There is impact too in the community, the laughter and the support that people enjoy, and I hope that much of this will come across in our report.

Another major focus of the past year has been to strengthen customer voice, through forums, committees, surveys and consultation on all aspects affecting the customer experience in our villages. It matters to us that our services are shaped by the views and aspirations of our customers and colleagues and Belong's aim is that we will continue to listen, respond and empower those living with us as we develop going forward.



Robert Armstrong
Chair of the Belong Board



Impact in action

For Jimmy Reynolds, the dream of a lifetime came to fruition when he received the welcome surprise of two dozen fellow Mods, along with their iconic scooters, on his doorstep.




The 70-year-old resident of Belong Atherton was receiving palliative support at the care village and had shared his ambitions to rekindle his passion with his carers, who put the wheels in motion to make this happen for Jimmy.

As a result of their efforts, kind-hearted Mods from Wigan Scooter Club and Bolton Two Hats Scooter Club jumped on their scooters and made their way to the Mealhouse Lane village to meet their new friend, take him for a ride around the local area and enjoy the chance to 'talk shop' and share their stories.

Speaking of the experience, Jimmy said: "When I saw what my carers had done, I was both shocked and overwhelmed. This was a great thing, and I am grateful to all that gave up their time to do this for me."

Year in numbers

Driving quality is imperative to our mission to put customers at the heart of all that we do in Belong and to promote excellent outcomes and wellbeing. This is reflected across a range of indicators.

	Belong 2022/23	Belong 2023/24
 Number of household residents ¹	859	835
 Number of Belong at Home customers	278	298
 Number of hours of home care	54,566	64,000
 Number of apartment tenants	221	208
 Number of Experience Days provided	2,773	4,160
 Number of people who accessed Belong's Admiral Nurse service	214	479
 Number of community groups regularly accessing our villages	95	125
 Percentage of household customers living with dementia	73%	80%
 Percentage of customers receiving a nursing service	41%	39%
 Average household customer age	86	85
 Occupancy in Belong households ²	94.9%	96.8%
 Average fee rate per week	£1,289	£1,396
 Percentage self-funding customers	64%	63%
 Percentage of customers publicly funded in households	36%	37%
 Number of household residents subsidised ³	45	34
 Number of new jobs created	67	41
 Total number of employees	1,244	1,301

¹The number of residents fluctuates according to the length of stay; for example a lower number of respite customers may cause this figure to drop without adversely affecting occupancy.





²Average UK Care Home occupancy in 2022/23 was 86.4% according to the Knight Frank 2023 Care Homes Trading Performance Review.

³Refers to the number of people who were previously privately funded and are now publicly funded, either due to a change in health or financial circumstances, with Belong being committed to enabling residents to remain with the organisation where this occurs.

Quality focus

Driving quality is imperative to our mission to put customers at the heart of all that we do and to promote excellent outcomes and wellbeing. This is reflected across a range of indicators.

Care Quality Commission Ratings

-  Six Belong villages are rated at least *Good* by CQC, including three villages (Belong Atherton, Belong Crewe and Belong Wigan) rated *Outstanding*.
-  One village (Belong Chester, which opened in July 2022) has yet to be rated.
-  One village (Belong Warrington) was assessed as *Requires Improvement* in 2022 and while positive changes to address feedback have long been embedded by the new leadership team, we continue to await reinspection.
-  All six Belong at Home services are rated at least *Good* by CQC, including one service which is rated *Outstanding*.

29% of inspected services rated
OUTSTANDING

64% of inspected services rated
GOOD

Customer reviews

Independently verified reviews on carehome.co.uk and homecare.co.uk continue to provide an external benchmark of customer sentiment, with an extensive number of extremely positive reviews.

9.8 Average review score
on carehome.co.uk

9.9 Average review score
on homecare.co.uk

Steve M, Son of Resident at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme; published on 28 December 2023

“My mum, 89 with Alzheimer’s went into Belong at the start of December 2023. The whole care staff have been excellent, both professionally and caring-wise. Within two weeks she was more alert, her mood was better, her anxiety had greatly reduced, her skin was hydrated and she was fully engaged, with two activities per day. It was a very difficult thing to do to move Mum from her own home but this was the best thing we could have done. Thank you Belong.”

M B, Wife of Belong at Home Customer; published on 14 March 2024

“Our team have a very caring and ‘can do’ attitude with my husband. All of them are friendly and cheerful. The admin team is really helpful and considerate, providing extra hours when needed and juggling the rota to cope when one carer went off sick, keeping me informed of any changes and asking if I minded the change. My husband is able to trust all the carers on his team. He likes to be left to their care.”



Dementia and oversight

Belong strengthened its senior operations team with the promotion of Peter Norman to the newly created Operational Quality Manager role, further augmenting the quality assurance team following the appointment of Caroline Baker to the newly created Head of Dementia and Quality Assurance role in the previous year. Rebecca Woodcock was also promoted to Head of Operations, completing the Senior Operations team.



Rebecca Woodcock, Head of Operations

There has been a focus on oversight and preparing for the new Care Quality Commission Single Assessment Framework, as well as the development of the organisation's dementia strategy.

Significant progress was made in creating and rolling out a new dementia training programme for all Belong colleagues and in embedding a new quality standards framework across all Belong services. Belong also presented at the Journal of Dementia Care Conference about its intergenerational work (see pages 16-17).



Peter Norman,
Operational Quality Manager

Admiral Nurse Service

Belong's Admiral Nurse service continued to provide expert input for people living with dementia, and was cited as a key quality indicator in the Gold Standards Framework appraisal. As mental health nurses specialising in dementia care, Admiral Nurses provide individualised support for family members, carers and people who have been medically diagnosed with any form of dementia.

Operated in partnership with Dementia UK, Belong offers this free dementia specialist support service to all Belong customers with a dementia diagnosis, as well as their family members and carers.

Admiral Nurses also run monthly dementia cafés across all Belong villages, which are open to local people living with dementia and their loved ones.



"Admiral nurses were a real guiding light as far as we were concerned. We're so glad we made contact with them and we didn't do what a lot of people do, bumbling along hoping for the best."

**Kevin Dillon,
husband of Sheila Dillon,
resident at Belong Warrington.**

Gold standard for end-of-life care

During the year, Belong Warrington and Newcastle-under-Lyme earned the Quality Hallmark Award for demonstrating best practice in end-of-life and palliative care, following Gold Standards Framework (GSF) assessments at both villages.

Assessors from the national organisation responsible for training and quality standards in the sector praised Belong's 'village living' model as conducive to high care standards and helping to promote the independence of people as much as possible.



Holistic approach

Activities provision, focus on exercise and falls prevention awareness, and relationships with external bodies, such as music therapy charity, Nordoff Robbins, were amongst the examples of strengths highlighted.

Focus on the individual

The reports commended 'clearly dedicated staff' who work alongside families to prepare for the final stages of life, prioritising dignity, compassion and a person-centred approach.

Group-wide excellence

The villages join Wigan, Atherton, Crewe and Macclesfield, which also hold the GSF accreditation, while Belong Morris Feinmann is accredited within the NHS Six Steps Palliative Framework.

Outstanding communication

The evaluation praised the approach to communication and the 'whole team support for residents and families at end-of-life, from housekeeping team to reception and all care staff'

Our people

GOLD status



In March 2024, Belong was assessed by Investors in People and retained its GOLD status, with advanced scores in nearly every indicator.

“A feature of Belong is everyone’s passion for what they do.”

IIP assessor

What came across to the assessor was that throughout this process, Belong continues to demonstrate strongly the key features at the heart of our culture:

- An unwavering commitment to our customers
- Real teamwork and a sense of ‘family’
- A culture of continuous improvement
- Fantastic training and career development opportunities
- Genuine commitment to listening to and empowering our people

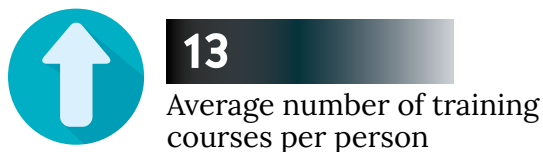
Reward and recognition

In April 2024, the minimum hourly rate of pay in Belong rose to £12. This maintained all colleague remuneration at the new Real Living Wage or above, with a 10.1% increase for all employees at this level since April 2023.

It demonstrated a significant investment in our workforce and reflected our commitment, as a not-for-profit organisation, to enhancing pay and ensuring Belong remains an attractive and rewarding place to work, both in terms of our benefits package and the satisfaction and privilege that comes with supporting our customers.

Beyond this, we took the opportunity this year to further enhance our pay rates for senior members of the household team, acknowledging the additional levels of responsibility involved in those roles.

Key stats 2023/24



Case study: Katie Gregson, receptionist at Belong Wigan

I've been with Belong for about eight years. It's a wonderful organisation to work for – I love working here. Each day is like visiting family as I'm very close with customers and colleagues. My nan, Celia, is an apartment tenant, and my mum is a support worker on one of the households, so we've three generations of our family here.



When Ant and I came to get married, we wanted to invite tenants to share our wedding with us. In the end, the pandemic and restrictions on numbers meant we had to stream it live to The Venue instead, so we dropped off Prosecco and cake beforehand, meaning they could join in raising a glass. It was lovely to have them with us!

Champion Awards



Belong once again recognised the exceptional talent of its colleagues at its annual Champion Awards, which this year were held at the iconic Hallé St Peter's in Manchester. Winners from across the organisation's villages and Belong at Home collected their trophies to rousing applause from colleagues. The winners were determined by a panel of independent judges, including industry experts and Belong customers.

Colleague survey 2023



Our annual colleague survey showed strong engagement with the organisation, with high scores in key areas as shown below. We have also made positive changes to address feedback from last year's survey, including the introduction of colleague lounges at all locations, the launch of the ACE Awards (a monthly recognition scheme), the launch of a social committee and increased internal communication.

Colleague Survey Result Scores (out of 5)

	Belong
I know what is expected of me	4.4
I feel we look after residents to a high standard	4.4
I feel we give effective support and care for those people living with dementia	4.2
I feel I am given the right level of training	4.1
I feel I work as part of a good team	4.0

Global leadership

In June 2023, Belong joined forces with Australia's HammondCare and The Green House Project in the US to form the Household Model International Consortium and advocate for the wider adoption of small, domestic household models of residential care.



As members of the consortium, the three organisations will work together to utilise their shared experience, skills, data and voice to promote the quality-of-life benefits of small household living.

The recent Royal Commission into Aged Care, Quality and Safety, a blueprint for reform of the Australian aged care sector, recommended a shift toward small household or small-scale congregate living.

Shared research agenda



One objective of the consortium is a shared research agenda, utilising each other's respective relationships with universities, to deepen knowledge on the household model and how it can be further developed and enhanced.

With operators of the small household form of residential care reporting reductions in hospital admissions, lower use of medications, and a higher quality of life for residents, one aim of the newly formed global alliance is to back this with evidence.

As well as research, the consortium will establish areas of strategic focus, joint papers, and position statements. There will also be opportunity for staff exchanges and enhanced learning, as well as shared learning materials and packages.

Award-winning

It was a record-breaking year for Belong in terms of awards success, with no fewer than 13 accolades won across the organisation over the course of the year. These included:



**LaingBuisson Award
2023 for
Innovation in Care**



**Third Sector Care
Award 2024:
Development and
Innovation**



**Third Sector Care
Award 2024:
Social Care
Nursing Award**



**Dementia Care Award
2023 for Outstanding
Dignity and Respect in
Dementia Care**



**Housing with
Care Awards:
Handyman
of the Year**



**Wigan and Leigh
End-of-Life and
Palliative Care Awards:
Dignity Champions
of the Year**



**Great North West
Care Awards:
Supported Living
Manager of the Year**

National Award for Innovation

The prestigious LaingBuisson Award for Innovation in Care was awarded to Belong for its success in establishing the UK's first intergenerational care village with a fully integrated children's research nursery at its heart. Belong Chester, which was officially opened in November 2023, incorporates the Nursery in Belong, which is operated by Belong's early years partner, the charity Ready Generations.

Judges said: "Belong's visionary approach is yielding tangible results addressing notoriously difficult challenges, such as reducing isolation and loneliness and having a positive impact on residents with dementia through interaction with children and through community networks more broadly."

Speaking about the award win, Belong Chief Executive, Martin Rix, said: "We're delighted to receive recognition at such prestigious national awards, not simply for pioneering groundbreaking models of care, but for demonstrating the positive impact these are having on people's lives. Congratulations to the team at Belong Chester for what they have achieved in their first year."

For more on Belong Chester and the impact of our intergenerational living setting, see page 16.

Belong at Home is No.1

In 2023, Belong at Home ranked first in the country's Top 20 Large and Mid-size Home Care Groups 2023, based on feedback from client and family reviews.

It is the only not-for-profit service in the country to have made the UK Top 20 every year since 2018.

Supporting people throughout the North West and Midlands to live independently in the wider community, Belong at Home achieved a group score of 9.9 out of 10 for assisting with one-to-one personal care, housekeeping, food preparation, as well as running errands, helping with excursions and offering companionship.

One daughter of a client reviewed: *"All the staff are caring, friendly and professional and have provided excellent support for Mum who has mixed dementia."*

Another said: *"They are very well trained and have proved to be totally dependable, flexible to our changing needs and always willing to go the extra mile."*



Above and beyond

Belong at Home was also distinguished with additional national and regional awards:



Stars of Social Care: Above and Beyond Community

Team Award won by Belong at Home Wigan



Great West Midlands Care Awards: Care Newcomer of

the Year won by Roksana Dryziewicka, Belong at Home Newcastle-under-Lyme

Andrew Shield, Head of Operations for Belong at Home, said: "This award marks another year of continued success, and we're delighted to receive such positive feedback from our clients and their loved ones."

Case study: Theatre night out

When our Crewe community support worker, Donna Woolrich, sensed how much theatre lover and Belong at Home customer, Jeanne, missed her outings to shows, she resolved to help make one happen.

After careful planning, the pair shared in the musical delights of *Beyond the Barricade*, a concert at the Crewe Lyceum, encompassing famous scores from West End and Broadway shows. Jane Gabbert, Belong at Home Crewe Area Manager, said: “Jeanne had an absolutely fabulous

time, dressing up and doing what she loves best. This was the second theatre trip organised by Donna, after she took Jeanne to catch a Christmas show last year, and I know she’s already scouting ‘What’s On’ listings to see what Jeanne might like to see next. Thank you Donna!”



On the frontline: inseparable siblings

Belong at Home continues to work tirelessly to attract a diverse workforce of carers. Two recruits who made the switch to home care over the past year were Macclesfield sisters, Rachel Smith, and Traci Herbert.

Safeguarding expert Rachel, then Head of College Student Support Services, sought a move that aligned more closely with her emotional needs. She explains: “Dealing with complaints all day really took its toll; I needed a job that was more positive, where I could still have an impact on the lives of others.”



It was after caring for her uncle in the final stages of his life, Rachel felt ready to embark on her new venture: “I’d known for a few years my next step would be in care. People are called to do it and I could wait forever and a day to be financially ready and it would never come.”

Older sister Traci was battling to keep afloat the family pub within a hospitality sector up against increased costs and decreased patronage. Traci recalls: “I needed a supplementary income that would allow me to work around my business. Rachel was really enthusiastic about Belong at Home and I’ve worked in care before, so it was the perfect opportunity.”



Spotlight on Belong Chester



ITV Granada Reports

Belong Chester celebrated its official opening in November 2023, sparking national and international interest in our intergenerational care village, home to the Nursery in Belong, which enables older people and young children to live and learn together.



ITV This Morning

Councillor Sheila Little enjoyed a VIP tour of the village, while Granada Reports spoke to residents and colleagues to find out more about their intergenerational living experience.



BBC The One Show

News of our intergenerational village has spread far and wide, with television cameras from BBC's The One Show, ITV's This Morning, and Germany's Deutsche Welle all popping in.



Deutsche Welle

We've also enjoyed interviews and stories in press and radio all over the world, from here in the UK all the way to New Zealand!

Amongst the visitors was The Guardian's then north of England editor, Helen Pidd, whose article: 'Young, old and marvellous: how a care home built a nursery - and everyone thrived', can be read via this link or scan the QR code: <https://bit.ly/GuardianBelongChester>



A podcast version, 'Today in Focus: what happens when you put a nursery in a care home?', featuring interviews from the visit, can be listened to via this link or scan the QR code: <https://bit.ly/GuardianChesterPodcast>



Intergenerational benefits

‘The Nursery in Belong’ is the culmination of five years of collaborative planning with award-winning national intergenerational charity Ready Generations, which operates The Nursery, working in partnership with Belong.



Planned intergenerational opportunities include weekly stay-and-play sessions, a multi-generational choir, storytelling, poetry and dance workshops. There are also many opportunities for more spontaneous interactions including gardening, shopping and eating together.

Impact

Intergenerational living at Belong Chester is contributing to improved wellbeing and reduced anxiety, with colleagues reporting that being around children is making people with dementia more relaxed.

Residents who initially said the nursery was a lovely idea but they wouldn't get involved personally are now regular and enthusiastic attendees at intergenerational events, and some even volunteer regularly in the nursery.

Residents report that daily engagement with the children's care and the wide range of shared opportunities gives them a renewed sense of purpose.

This also manifests in greater motivation to engage in physical activity, including walking longer and further when they go 'prambling' (taking little ones out in their prams with colleagues) and taking part in dance and movement sessions.

By supporting the children's learning through such things as storytelling, reading, sharing memories

and teaching simple skills, there is improved cognitive functioning and mental well-being.

Data collected since opening shows how residents have benefitted from regular interactions with children and their families.

Customer surveys show that all household residents join in intergenerational experiences, 50% weekly and others occasionally, and 54% report that seeing the children improves their quality of life, with 40% of relatives also strongly agreeing with this statement.

Of the people living independently in an apartment at the village, 82% join in intergenerational experiences regularly. Reductions in isolation and loneliness have also been significant.

Over 80% of apartment tenants report that both planned and spontaneous intergenerational interactions are changing their lives for the better, with their families also commenting on the difference children are making to their loved ones' wellbeing.

Animal therapy

Also in the spotlight was Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme, which attracted media attention when alpacas, Carlos and Teddy, came to visit.

The pair made themselves at home at the care village, mingling with their hosts, taking tea in the onsite bistro and learning about the town's history with a tour of



the integrated Belong Heritage Gallery. They then took up a front-of-house post, offering a warm welcome to visitors.

The furry guests quickly forged friendships with Belong's customers and colleagues who provided an abundance of love and cuddles whilst taking the opportunity to ask their owners questions and provide their own amusing tales of past antics involving animals.



Often confused with llamas, alpacas are members of the Camelidae family and are normally found up to 5,000 meters above sea level in the heights of The Andes mountains. The animal therapy session was made possible thanks to Knightley Alpaca Trekking, a Staffordshire-based family business offering experiences with the South American mammal.



Ducklings bring spring joy

Residents at Belong Macclesfield watched in wonder as Easter was heralded by new life and new beginnings, with the arrival of five ducklings.

The new additions were hatched as part of an 'incredible eggs' project, organised by household Team Leader Laura Barsted, to create opportunities for residents to support the hatching process and provide care and love to their new companions.

Five eggs arrived at the village, complete with incubator, and within 24 hours, the first of the eggs had hatched. Roll on 72 hours and Dwayne, Daphne, Donald, Delilah and Delwyn were firmly established as fully-fledged members of the Belong Macclesfield community, even attending one of the village management meetings. The ducklings brought great delight to residents, tenants and colleagues alike over the Easter period, ahead of moving to their new home with one of the residents' relatives.

Wellbeing through exercise

Exercise is a fundamental part of Belong culture and every resident has a personalised exercise programme, so that exercise is a measurable key performance indicator. Every village has a gym kitted out with specialist equipment and exercise technology and employs at least one qualified exercise specialist.

There is also an effective system of referral, consultation and communication in place, and Belong works closely with GPs, physiotherapists, allied health professionals, as well as families, to develop a programme of exercise that is personalised to individual customers.

Individual programmes are primarily focused on exercise in the gym but also in communal areas of the shared households, as well as in bedrooms for those who are bedbound. There is also a focus on falls prevention, with colleague training in this area and participation in national campaigns, including Falls Prevention Awareness Week.

Results show an improvement in quality of life, which has been demonstrated by customers previously restricted to wheelchairs regaining the ability to walk; an increase in mobility and strength, and greater participation in meaningful activity. Other indicators included shorter hospital stays.

Case study: Jerry, Belong Crewe

Jerry is a naval veteran, having served on several ships during his years in service. Over 30 years ago, he was involved in a traffic accident which left him paralysed on one side.

Jerry moved into Belong Crewe in May 2018 and took an instant interest in the gym, attending several times a week. After 11 months, with assistance, he was able to walk again using a quad-pod walking stick and a few months later, Jerry was able to complete the entire three flights of stairs at the village.

Jerry has maintained his passion and motivation and in the past 12 months, he has completed a staggering 316.24km (196.5 miles)!

Well done Jerry, we salute you.



Wellbeing through music

Belong villages are typically filled with music and we work with a number of external providers to support us in running choirs, staging performances, and enabling our residents to make music, as well as listen to it.

Tomforte Choir, Belong Morris Feinmann



Launched early in 2023, the Tomforte Choir is led by renowned choir master Dan McDwyer and has grown in numbers and in confidence, meeting weekly and staging impressive concerts for key national and seasonal events, such as the King's Coronation and Chanukah.

The Sankofa Songsters Intergenerational Choir, Belong Chester



Also going from strength to strength is Belong Chester's intergenerational choir, led by music teacher, Amanda Wrigley. The polished choir sang in

front of VIPs for the village's official opening, as well as being invited to perform at a carol concert at All Saints Church in Hoole.

Nordoff & Robbins Music Therapy



At Belong Warrington, our partnership with national music therapy charity, Nordoff &

Robbins, provides weekly opportunities for residents and apartment tenants to enjoy group or individual music sessions. The one-to-one work in particular is a powerful way of connecting with those who may have lost verbal

communication skills but continue to respond to and through music.

Benefits

The benefits of music for people with dementia are well documented, including:

- Cognitive benefits through triggering memories, providing focus and maintaining language skills through singing
- Emotional benefits through mood enhancement, reduction of anxiety and helping people to express emotions
- Social benefits of shared musical experiences
- Therapeutic benefits of reduced agitation, helping with routine and structure and even supporting with pain management
- Quality of life benefits as music often brings great pleasure to communities and can help people maintain their sense of identity

Wellbeing in nature



Getting out and about in the wider community is as important to us as what we do in the villages. Gardening clubs, local walks and outdoor entertainment are some of the ways we regularly support people to spend time outdoors, and beyond this, our experience teams plan outings in line with residents' wishes.



Wet 'n' wild

Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme organised an outing to Westport Lake to coincide with the Wildlife Trust's 30 Days Wild challenge.

Bus to Bents

Belong Warrington loaned a double decker bus, courtesy of Andrew Campman, for a trip to Bents Garden and Home Centre, where they spent the day appreciating the summer plants before enjoying a spot of lunch.



Atherton in Bloom

Belong Atherton transformed its outdoor spaces for all to enjoy, thanks to funding from Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership, as well as the support of the village community and an army of local volunteers.

Wigan gardening club lends helping hand

When members of Belong Wigan's gardening club realised that Experience Day customer and club member David Ratcliffe was struggling to keep on top of his own garden at home, they stepped in to give it a tidy-up and makeover and get it ready for the summer months.



Community engagement

The past year has seen significant growth in use of our villages by members of the wider community.

Experience Days grew by 50% from 2,773 days provided in 2022/23 to 4,160 in 2023/24, while customer transactions in Belong bistros grew by 35% in the same period, increasing from 84,000 to 114,000.

Each village continues to publish a bi-monthly *What's On* programme, distributing this in the local community to promote access to village events and activities. This openness to the public contributes significantly to vibrancy of our village centres.

Beyond this, villages partner with a wide range of community groups and organisations to ensure a rich programme of opportunities for our customers, supported by a growing number of volunteers from our local communities.



Manchester City Football Club

Arranged by a member of the Belong Morris Feinmann community, Manchester City brought its three trophies to the village for resident fans to enjoy when the club won the treble last year. Building on this, the village is set to host a new series of the club's 'Reminicity' workshops aimed at people living with dementia.



Grow Macclesfield

Belong Macclesfield has formed a relationship with local community allotment, Grow Macclesfield, who visited the village to share horticultural insights and experiences, before running an autumn wreath-making workshop out of plants and flowers from the allotment.

Belong Crewe Silver Pride

Belong Crewe hosted its fifth Silver Pride event, an annual celebration of LGBTQ+ life and culture, especially for the over 55s. Guests from all over the town descended on the village to revel in the colourful festivities, as Belong and partners raised awareness of the importance of inclusivity.



The future

Belong's vision is to continue to innovate as it expands provision of its services.



Belong Birkdale

Work is underway at Belong Birkdale, with Belong's first seaside care village on site and due to hand over in 2025.

The Southport care village will be home to over 100 people. Accommodation includes six households with 24-hour care and nursing support and 30 one and two bedroom independent living apartments, which will be available to buy or rent. Belong Birkdale will also feature a village centre with a range of amenities.



Innovation

With the ambition to continue to lead the sector through innovative care provision, Belong is regularly evaluating its operations to identify opportunities for improvement and innovation. An area of particular focus is the evaluation and adoption of artificial intelligence tools, to help drive efficiency, productivity and creativity.



Research

We continue to engage with a range of partners to help evaluate the impact of our work. These include Leeds Beckett University, Ready Generations, The Bluecoat and Nordoff & Robbins.

Belong is a not-for-profit organisation with over thirty years' experience in providing outstanding care. As a not-for-profit, any surplus is reinvested into its award-winning services, people and facilities.

Belong Limited is a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Communities Benefit Societies Act 2014, registered number 27346R.

Belong Limited is registered in England and Wales at Pepper House, Market Street, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5DQ.

T: 01270 610 666

enquiries@belong.org.uk

www.belong.org.uk



BELONG
VILLAGES