

# Prime Time News



Summer 2024

*Welcome to Prime Time News, the newsletter for Curo sheltered housing customers and older residents in the prime of life.*



## A trip down memory lane

**The Rural Independent Living Service's Memory Café recently took a trip back in time with a visit to Radstock Museum. Verity Baetke, Dementia Challenge Rural Co-ordinator, runs Memory Cafés in Chew Magna and Peasedown St John.**

"I applied for a Curo Communities Grant of £250 to support the visit," she says. "The Chew Magna group had enjoyed a visit to their local animal park, so we wanted to organise a trip for the Peasedown group."

"Twenty-one people attended. They had a good look around the museum and some even saw photos of their relatives from years ago," says Verity.

"We often talk about local history at the Memory Cafés and staff from Radstock Museum have come along to give talks. They've brought artefacts from the museum to pass around – it's great because they're tactile and so can bring memories to life."

Here's what some of the group members said about the trip:

- "This has been really interesting, a trip back to the beginning."
- "This is how a shop should be."
- "It's like my granny's kitchen – she had a stove like that."
- "I used to sit at a school desk exactly like this."
- "This has been a lovely visit, it's brought it all back."

Memory Cafés are free for anyone, whether they have memory problems themselves or are caring for someone else.

"Many people are referred from the Royal United Hospital or by GPs, social services or Village Agents from West of England Rural Network," says Verity.

## Come to a Memory Café

The Peasedown St John Memory Café meets at the community room at Hillcrest, Peasedown St John, on the last Thursday of every month.

The Chew Magna Memory Café meets on the last Tuesday of each month at the Baptist Chapel on Tunbridge Road, Chew Magna.

If you'd like to join us at a Memory Café, or if you have any questions, please call Verity on 07972 205984. We may be able to arrange transport to the cafés.

Below: Contact Verity to come to a Memory Café

[www.curo-group.co.uk](http://www.curo-group.co.uk)





Curo's  
**BiG**  
Get Together

2024

## JOIN THE FUN AT CURO'S BIG GET TOGETHER THIS SEPTEMBER

It's Curo's annual event, bringing our customers together for free food, prizes, kids' activities and more. This year is extra special as we'll be launching Curo's new Vision: **'Everyone Feels Proud about the Quality of our Homes'**. Find out how delivering quality homes will be at the heart of everything we do and what improvements you can expect as a result.

You'll also get the chance to meet our friendly teams and ask them about anything that's been on your mind.

The event runs from 10am-4pm at The Hub, Mulberry Way, Mulberry Park Bath BA2 5BU.

Here's what we've lined up for you:

- **Quality homes...** hear from our Exec Team about what our new Vision means for you
- **Meet the teams...** from across Curo. Ask about our new Vision
- **Exec Question Time...** a chance ask anything to our Chair of the Board and Chief Exec
- **Awards...** find out who won our Curo Community Awards and Curo in Bloom
- **Prizes...** win one of the many giveaways up for grabs

- **Free food...** we're putting on some tasty food with veggie options, plus refreshments
- **Free transport...** contact us if you need help getting to The Hub.

The venue has level access with wheelchair-accessible facilities and an induction hearing loop. Limited parking for blue-badge holders can be reserved.

To book tickets email us at [VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk) and someone will get in touch. Ask your Independent Living Officer, Sheltered Housing Officer or Livewell Officer if you need help to book.

THE  
HUB  
mulberry park

curo

Join us from 10am-4pm  
We'd love to see you there!

## Calling all gardeners

Show off your glorious garden and dazzling displays to see if you can win some great prizes with our VoiceBox Curo in Bloom 2024 competition. Whether you have a window box, hanging basket or a bigger space, there's a category for everyone.

First prize for each category is a £75 gift voucher and trophy. Second place gets £50 and third place £25, all in Love2Shop gift vouchers. Closing date for entries is midnight Weds 28 August 2024.

Please ask your Sheltered Housing, Independent Living or Livewell Officer to take photos of your blooms and email them to [VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk)

## Community Awards

Do you think your community is amazing? Is there a community hero where you live? Why not nominate them for an award:

**Curo Community Awards** are your chance to nominate your community for all the good things they've done and the impact they've had.

**Curo Community Hero Awards** are a way to say thanks to that special someone from your community who goes the extra mile for their neighbours, their community and Curo.

To enter, download a form from [www.curo-group.co.uk/communityawards](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/communityawards) and post it to Community Awards, FREEPOST CURO. If you'd like us to send you a form, call us on 01225 366000.

Entries need to be in by Sunday 1 September 2024.





**There are some new faces in Curo's Resident Engagement Team. We find out more about Hannah Gavin and Neil Rogers (*pictured*).**

**Neil Rogers, Resident Engagement Coordinator**

#### **Why Curo?**

I'm excited about the opportunity to meet our customers and establish trusting relationships with the communities we serve. I wanted a role that would inspire me to jump out of bed each morning.

#### **What's your favourite hobby or pastime?**

Drumming has been a passion of mine for more than 35 years, and I play in two rock bands. I've had the privilege of performing at various venues, including Glastonbury Festival and the Bristol Beacon.

#### **If you could have any superpower, what would it be?**

I would choose the ability to prevent people from committing evil acts. Imagine a world free from invasions and wars – a safer and better place for everyone.

**Hannah Gavin, Resident Engagement Coordinator**

#### **Tell us a bit about what you do at Curo...**

I'm a point of contact for our customers, someone to talk to face to face. I help to run different groups, giving voices to our customers and can act as the midpoint between customers and our specialist teams.

#### **What's your favourite hobby or pastime?**

Tap dancing! I'm part of a local group – they're a lovely bunch. We work on a different dance every six weeks.

#### **If you could have any superpower, what would it be?**

The ability to time travel. Living in Bath, I'd love to go back to Georgian or Roman times and see firsthand what life was like.

➔ Hannah and Neil are visiting the areas we serve for Community Catch-ups this summer. To request a Community Catch-up visit to your area, please email [Voicebox@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:Voicebox@curo-group.co.uk)

# Sign language service

By clicking on a button on our website, customers can instantly connect to one of SignVideo's team of British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters who will then relay the call to Curo's service team.

- Simply go to the page: [www.curo-group.co.uk/contact-us/signvideo/](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/contact-us/signvideo/)
- Click on the black button that says: 'Connect to BSL Interpreter'.
- A SignVideo interpreter will appear on your screen to interpret your conversation.

#### **What do I need?**

To use SignVideo, you will need a device such as a smartphone, laptop or desktop, a good internet connection and a webcam (plug-in or built-in).

To find out more about the service ask your Sheltered Housing, Independent Living or Livewell Officer.

 **SignVideo**  
by Sorenson

  
Powered by  
**SignVideo**



# All about Attendance Allowance

**Recent research has found that over 1.1 million pension age households could be missing out on £5.2 billion of Attendance Allowance per year.**

**This support is intended to help pension-age households cope with the extra costs of disability.**

Attendance Allowance is available to people over pension age who are assessed as needing assistance with day-to-day living or mobility, even if no assistance is in place.

Your Sheltered Housing, Independent Living or Livewell Office can help you find out if you're entitled to claim Attendance Allowance. Here are some of the questions they might ask you to check if you're eligible:

- Do you have any illnesses or disabilities? (This can include physical, sight, hearing or speech problems, or mental health.)
- Not including your GP, do you see any other health professionals regularly?
- Are you on a waiting list for surgery?
- Have you had any medical tests for your illness or disability?
- Do you require aids and adaptations to help you manage day-to-day life?

- Do you struggle, or need support getting yourself in and out of bed?
- Do you find it difficult to wash, bathe or shower or have someone who supports you? (This can include having a hairdresser wash hair or shave beards.)
- Do you struggle with dressing, wearing particular types of clothes due to difficult fastenings or need someone to help you dress?
- Do you use walking aids, have help, or struggle to move around indoors?
- Do you have someone who helps with your medication, organising, collecting or reminding you to take it?
- Do you need help from someone else to communicate with others, make calls, help with letters or book appointments, for example?
- Do you need help to take part in hobbies, interests, social or religious activities and would you be unable to take part or attend on your own?
- Do you need support from another person overnight?

**There are two rates of Attendance Allowance:**

- A lower rate of £72.65 per week for frequent help or constant supervision during the day, or supervision at night.
- A higher rate of £108.55 per week for help or supervision throughout both day and night, or if a medical professional has said someone might have 12 months or less to live.

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

If you need support with any money matters, please remember that your Sheltered Housing, Independent Living or Livewell Office are here to help. They're specially trained in helping customers to manage their money and maximise their income. Just ask if you have any questions on money matters and they will be delighted to support you.





# “We need to boost biodiversity”



Above: Carl McMurtry

Carl McMurtry, Curo's Director of Estates Services, on what you can expect on grass-cutting and the principles behind our initiatives to support nature.

The idea behind No Mow May is to delay mowing grass early in the growing season, creating a habitat for pollinators just when they are hatching or coming out of hibernation.

We first piloted No Mow May three years ago and have received great feedback from people who have more diverse flora and fauna in their areas for the first time. We are keen to start collaborating with ecologists, such as those at the University of Bath, to measure the outcomes more officially.

We also leave certain patches of grass untouched for the whole season – this is called Nothing for Nature. We carry out a 'cut and collect' at the end of the season, which enables the fallen seeds to sow. We include banks and outside edges in Nothing for Nature, avoiding large open spaces or anywhere people might like to sit and have a picnic.

As an organisation that owns a lot of land, we have a duty of care to increase our biodiversity.

The target for any new developments is a biodiversity net gain of 10%.

We have remodelled service charges since we started working with our new contractor, Glendale. Customers are only charged when services are carried out. This means that in the areas where No Mow May and Nothing for Nature are in place, customers will see reduced costs for reduced work.

➔ Since changing grounds contractors, we acknowledge that some of you have experienced delays between grass cuts. If you are concerned that this has affected your area, please email [estates@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:estates@curo-group.co.uk) – speak to your Sheltered Housing, Independent Living, or Livewell Officer if you need help getting online.

## Meet the Grounds Team

We now have a dedicated Grounds Team at Curo who will be carrying out repairs to paths, walls and fences.

The team will be fixing cracks and replacing damaged sections in paths, repairing fencing posts and panels, and sorting out damaged brickwork and pointing in existing walls.

Larger, more complex jobs will continue to be managed by our contractors.

The team has been created to help ensure that these smaller repairs can be carried out more quickly and efficiently. They've already made great progress on reducing the number of outstanding jobs, completing around 65 tasks every month.



Our Grounds Team

# Taking the HouseProud Pledge



**We want all our customers to feel welcome, regardless of their sexuality.**

Curo have signed up to the HouseProud Pledge, a scheme that all social housing providers can sign up to, to demonstrate their commitment to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) resident equality and support.

As part of this we've set up LGBTQ+ Resident Engagement and Colleague Groups. Julie Evans, Chief Property Officer (pictured above), is the Executive sponsor of Curo's work in this area. "I'm a gay woman," she says, "and I think it's important for a senior leader in the business who is out and proud to lend their support. It sends a visible signal to colleagues, customers, and to people who might be considering working with us that we welcome diversity of all types. It shows that sexuality is no barrier to career progress at Curo."

The home is of huge importance to LGBTQ+ residents, as it should be a place where people can freely express their sexual orientation and/or their gender identity without prejudice.

Recent research from HouseProud found that one-in-five gay men reported modifying

their home in some way – for example, moving pictures or books – to hide their sexual orientation from a visiting repairs operative or housing officer.

**"The older generation may have faced more discrimination and may be more likely to hide their sexuality. We're keen to work with them and address these issues"**

"When I was younger and less confident, I did similar things myself," says Julie. "I've moved photos and haven't corrected people when they've assumed my partner was a man. I suppose I felt a sense of shame that I had absolutely no reason to feel. If you're gay, there is nothing to be ashamed of."

"We're conscious that we have Extra Care and Sheltered homes for older residents – and we don't know if some of these are LGBTQ+ customers," says Julie.

"The older generation may have faced more discrimination and may be more likely to hide their sexuality. We're keen to work with them and address these issues. There has been too much ignorance. We need to know what their experiences are."

We'd love to hear from older residents who are interested in joining the LGBTQ+ Resident Engagement Group. "It's a great chance to meet new people and make friends," says Julie. "But if the thought of joining a group is putting you off, you can have a chat with one of us first. And if you don't want to join the group, you can still let us know your thoughts and experiences."

➔ If you'd like to know more about the LGBTQ+ Resident Engagement Group, please email [pride@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:pride@curo-group.co.uk) or talk to your Sheltered Housing, Independent Living or Livewell Officer.





Meet the colleague

## **Independent Living Support Worker Kelly Hetreed (pictured) on how her customers make her day.**

### **What drew you to your role?**

I had the opportunity to do a work placement with the Independent Living Service in 2022. I was supported by Women's Work Lab, which helps mothers get back into work after they've taken career breaks to have children. I really wanted a permanent role, but I couldn't drive. I joined the Customer Contact Team instead, but it wasn't for me. I worked there for six months and I'm glad I did as I gained background knowledge into how Curo operates. I had a work coach, and I told them I was going to learn to drive and then get a job as a support worker with the ILS. They told me, "Things don't always go to plan." But I passed my driving test first time, and now here I am!

### **What did you do before?**

I was a full-time mum. I have two amazing boys, who are 12 and 14 years old. They were my entire life for 11 years. But the Women's Work Lab gave me the confidence to join the workforce.

### **What do you like about your job?**

I love the people. My customers are inspiring, funny, complex and sometimes challenging. It's a real privilege that they trust

me to help them. One of my customers said to me the other day, "What would I do without you, Kel?" It's not only me helping them – they teach me so much, too. I really appreciate how much they help me to learn and grow.

### **What does a typical day look like for you?**

I visit six customers a day. I might be taking someone shopping, driving them to an appointment, going through forms with them to help with their finances, looking at bills, or getting in touch with energy companies. What's really lovely is that even if you make a plan, you never really know how your day's going to turn out. I have a bond of trust with my customers, and I need to be flexible – even if I don't know how to do something, I'll find out. I'm learning on the job, and that's wonderful.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

My favourite thing is spending time with my parents and my two boys. I also like going to see live music, and I'm a big fan of the metal genre. People think metal fans are scary, but we're actually all big softies!

## **Need support at home?**

The Independent Living Service is here to support people to live at home, independently, without the need to move into supported accommodation. We offer a range of services to suit you or your loved one/s, with varying levels of support.

"We can help with so much," says Kelly Hetreed. "It's a service that's truly tailored to each customer's unique needs."

We support anyone over the age of 18, living in B&NES, Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

When you contact us we'll arrange a visit from one of our experienced colleagues to answer any questions you have and explain the service and the kind of support we can provide.

➔ Whether it's for you or one of your friends or family, give us a call on 01225 366135 or email [ils@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:ils@curo-group.co.uk) and let's see how we can help.



Above: One of the special alarms available with the ILS service



# Summer tea-break teaser

Congratulations to Susan Tugwells who won £50 in Love2shop vouchers in our winter wordsearch competition.

This issue we're giving away £50 in Love2shop vouchers. For your chance to win, courtesy of MyCuro, Curo's secure online portal for residents, find the summer-themed words below in this issue's wordsearch.

MyCuro is a great way to get in touch with Curo online. You can use MyCuro to see all sorts of information, such as repairs you've reported and your rent balance, and to make payments to your account, all in a safe and secure environment. You can also send us an enquiry or join our Livechat service where you can speak to a colleague in our Contact team.

If you'd like to find out about MyCuro, ask your LO, SHO or ILSO to show you more or, if you have access to the internet, have a go at registering yourself by visiting [my.curo-group.co.uk](http://my.curo-group.co.uk). You'll just need your tenancy number to get started.

Find all the hidden summer words listed, and either email your wordsearch to [ils@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:ils@curo-group.co.uk) with Prime Time Wordsearch as subject, or post to Prime Time Wordsearch, Freepost CURO, to arrive by 9 September, and we'll pick one lucky winner.

## How many Summer words can you find?

H	B	F	S	E	U	C	E	B	R	A	B	S	F
O	U	L	W	O	R	K	W	D	C	K	Q	E	C
L	T	I	I	T	N	E	I	O	C	E	F	S	Z
I	T	Z	M	F	W	M	F	O	V	R	D	S	E
D	E	L	S	Y	U	T	M	R	I	Z	F	A	D
A	R	Z	U	H	X	M	K	S	E	J	J	L	A
Y	F	T	I	Q	A	W	B	Y	L	S	V	G	N
S	L	P	T	H	F	E	W	H	S	M	H	N	O
J	I	W	C	Z	E	K	A	V	N	I	N	U	M
I	E	R	R	Z	B	U	Y	Q	B	W	A	S	E
V	S	Z	W	D	V	C	G	E	G	S	J	D	L
A	U	G	U	S	T	T	A	U	L	Q	T	L	F
A	E	L	T	S	A	C	D	D	N	A	S	R	B
J	D	Q	T	B	H	A	L	L	E	R	B	M	U

Name: .....

Telephone: .....

Full T&Cs available on request or at [curo-group.co.uk/competitions](http://curo-group.co.uk/competitions)



# Pizza Scrolls

Simple savoury bakes, perfect for picnics and packed lunches.

## Ingredients

- 220ml warm water
- 1 packet (7g) fast action yeast
- 400g strong bread flour + a little extra for flouring your surfaces
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- Jar of tomato pizza sauce
- Grated mozzarella cheese
- Fresh basil leaves

## Method

- Preheat oven to 180°C (fan).
- Add yeast to warm water. Set to one side, combine bread flour, sugar and salt in a large mixing bowl.
- Add yeast/water to dry ingredients and bring together with your hands to form a dough. Tip out onto a floured work surface and knead for 5-10 minutes, return to bowl and leave in a warm place to prove for at least 30 mins.
- Once dough has doubled in size, knock it back by pushing the air out of the dough with your fist and tip it out onto a lightly floured surface. Roll dough into a large rectangle, keeping thickness around 5mm.
- Use spoon to spread sauce evenly all over dough before sprinkling with cheese and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of basil, roughly torn. Roll it all up into a long sausage shape and cut into 12 portions.
- Place scrolls swirl side up on baking tin, space out for expansion and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden. Allow to cool slightly, add fresh basil leaves and serve.

