



Canal &
River Trust

National User Forum

Welfare Officer: 4 month review

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Welfare Officer

Living waterways transform places and enrich lives

4 Month Review

The role, responsibilities, and my findings

– Initial Thoughts.

- Signposting.

– Foundations of Support.

- Welfare Officer and Policy

Initial Thoughts



My Findings: so far.....

- Abundance of local knowledge within CRT teams.
- High level of compassion from officers.
- Signposting in general already happening.
- No clearly defined welfare policy/guidelines
- Different levels of signposting knowledge

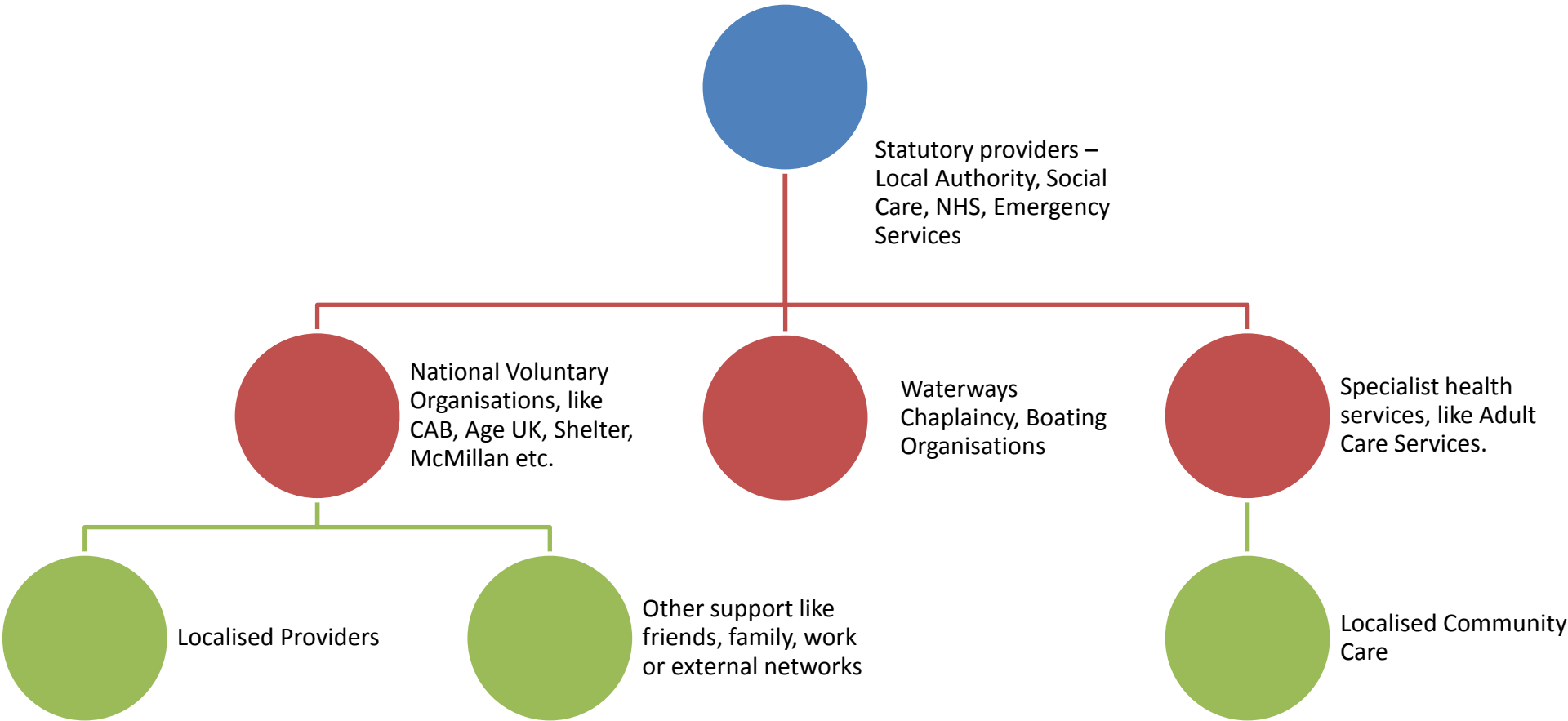
Key examples of areas of concern:

- Financial Capacity (Claiming benefits, Housing Benefit, JSA, etc)
- Substance/Alcohol Abuse
- Mental Health issues
- Age concerns (older generation)
- Knowing localised support services
- Unable to comply with license conditions (due to a vulnerability)

Signposting

- The role will be a signposting service
- Designed to help boaters to make informed choices about the type of support they require and that we signpost to the most appropriate partners.
- Canal and River Trust will not be undertaking the support directly.

Foundation of Support



Welfare Officer

- Oversight of the Welfare Policy.
- Communication of the policy and guidance on it throughout the organisation.
- Engagement with local and national organisations, local and national government, charities and relevant bodies to enhance joint working practices and develop multi agency support networks.

Along with the policy, toolkits and FAQ's I have been actively building our support networks and engagement with:

- Local authorities
- Health Services
- Mental Health Services
- National Charities
- Localised support providers

- Outreach Teams
- Benefit teams
- Boating Organisations
- Waterways Chaplains
- And looking at the changes to the welfare reform, in particular Universal Credit

I will also be challenging decisions, and applying pressure when statutory support is not provided.

Going Forward

- The welfare role is a new role, we need to make sure that the policy is worded correctly and that our responsibilities are clear.
- We cover a vast network of canals and to ensure the role works for everyone we need clear guidelines.
- Cases of welfare support and vulnerabilities will initially be dealt with by local teams.
- I'm always here to offer advice if needed.