

Volunteer profile: Simon Sheldrake



Semi-retired admin volunteer, Simon Sheldrake, started volunteering with Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland in August 2021 and has contributed countless hours, knowledge, and skills to assist departments at our head

Name: Simon Sheldrake

Career background: I've had a varied career spanning over nearly 50 years including: Retail (Marks & Spencer, Tesco); Research and Project Management (Loughborough University, Leicester University); Contract management (for a national educational charity); Civil Service (Inland Revenue, DHSS) and worked for other charities over the years. Also more practical jobs such as working on a pig farm, working in a joinery works, and helping someone build a house!

How long have you volunteered with Age UK LS&R? Since August 2021

Volunteer role(s): Various roles within the volunteering department: system and database updates; obtaining references; updating/designing forms; sometimes doing DBS checks; mailouts, etc. Also currently looking at features of a learning platform for online delivery of staff training.

What do you get up to as a volunteer? I try to come into head office once a week to touch base with my colleagues. But mostly, I prefer working from home. This allows me to be with my wife, helping out when necessary, and to play with my beautiful cat. I also volunteer when needed at our village drop-in centre for activities such as jumble sales, craft sales etc.

Why did you start volunteering with Age UK LS&R? I was made redundant from my paid role with Age UK and was in a position where I could semi-retire on a small pension and stay with the charity doing useful work.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with Age UK LS&R? It's no secret that I like doing things with spreadsheets and my volunteering roles help me keep up-to-speed with this and other areas of technology. I also liked visiting some of the shops last year to get an update on current volunteer numbers. I hope to get to visit the new Re-use shop before too long. There's a lot of stuff there I'd like to go through – so too would my wife.

Most special volunteering moment: I've always had a sense of pride working for charities over the years. I like to tell people I work for our charity and cajole them into giving me stuff to bring in for our shops to sell. I also made an effort to phone lots of people during Covid, as I saw this as an important thing to do in the circumstances. I liked the way our charity 'stepped up to the plate' when Covid started without waiting to be asked.