

# Find Out About Volunteering Opportunities

## Age UK Rotherham

You will gain new skills, meet new people, and have fun! It won't cost you to be a volunteer as equipment, refreshments and travel costs will be covered by Age UK Rotherham. Some examples of the type of volunteering you can do are:

- Winter Emergency Volunteers to ensure essentials supplies were provided to those most in need
- Volunteer Driver for Winter Emergency Scheme, to deliver emergency shopping to clients at various locations throughout the borough
- Volunteer Walker for Winter Emergency Scheme, to deliver emergency shopping to clients within your own safe walking area
- Volunteer Befriender
- Link Line Caller This is a telephone befriending service that offers support to lonely and isolated people 7 days a week on a permanent or temporary basis

For an application pack or more information on either of the above opportunities please contact us by phoning **01709 386 835** or email **carolyn.hacking@ageukrotherham.org**

## Rotherham Volunteer Centre

Some older people are anxious about volunteering for a number of reasons, for example, their changeable health, concerns with the availability and accessibility of transport and the costs involved. Rotherham Volunteer Centre can talk to you about your concerns and explain the opportunities available.

We have a variety of opportunities from Charity Shop Assistant to Gardener, Lunch Club Assistant to Receptionist and Befriender to Trustee. Some roles will require a commitment over a period of hours each week, others may require just a couple of hours each month.

For more info ring Rotherham Volunteer Centre on **01709 834 464** or visit **www.do-it.org.uk**

## Alzheimer's Society Befriender

If you are looking for something positive to do and have a few hours to spare once a week or once a fortnight then you could become one of our dedicated volunteer befrienders. You would meet someone with the early stages of dementia on a regular basis and build trust with that person. You might visit them at home to provide companionship or go out into the local community so that they can take part in activities, hobbies or interests.

No special qualifications or experience needed, just a caring and patient nature.

For more info call Gail Curtis on **01709 580 543** or e-mail **Gail.Curtis@alzheimers.org.uk**



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Older people are the backbone of a large part of the volunteering that takes place across the country. They make a huge contribution to society and local community life through their commitment and life experience.

Around 30% of those aged 65-74 and 20% of those aged over 75 do some formal volunteering. Being a volunteer helps many older people stay mentally and physically healthy, it helps prevent isolation, builds confidence, self-esteem and a sense of self worth.

Rotherham Older Peoples Forum (ROPF) is working together with Age UK Rotherham on a project looking at older people volunteering in Rotherham.

We are talking to older people about why they might be a volunteer; what they get out of volunteering; what the community gains from older volunteers; what are some of the barriers to becoming a volunteer and what voluntary opportunities there are in Rotherham.

# Older People Volunteering

## Being an Older Volunteer

All members of ROPF are older people who are active volunteers in their communities. They recently discussed why they get involved as active volunteers and the types of activity they do. They said;

- Running coffee mornings
- Local tenants and residents associations
- Being part of a group which influences health services
- Committee member of a local community building
- Helping to organise community events and activities
- Visiting other older people
- Running a group for BME older people

*"I get pleasure knowing I have made someone happy"*

*"I never gave volunteering a thought in the past but now I really enjoy it, and would recommend it to anyone, giving a bit of time to make a very big difference"*

## Why I volunteer...

### Rose

ROPF & Age UK Rotherham Link Line

Rose is 89 years old, she has COPD and lives on her own. She has been an active volunteer for most of her life.

"It keeps me going, when my condition flares up I can't go anywhere but I can be a link line volunteer from my own home. I used to be able to go out visiting but I don't like to let people down if the weather gets very bad. I do it because people are lonely, particularly men, and I believe you can always learn something, life is a lesson! I get to talk to people which is

lovely. I have lots of ideas for activities for older people such as Scrabble clubs and trips out. I talk to so many people and it helps them feel appreciated and thought about. I feel I have been very lucky in life so I want to put something back into the community. Being a committee member for ROPF keeps me busy too, I meet some lovely people and it is really interesting work. Volunteering may not be for everybody, it depends on your personality but it keeps you active and stops you wasting the day away"

**"It's good to have a purpose in life!"**

**"I leave him with a smile on his face and I have a smile on mine"**

**"Give it a try, once you have tried it, you will want to do a lot more, you will realise that giving a little time can benefit someone a great deal."**

## Why Volunteer?

Everyone is different, and the decision to volunteer will be influenced by a mixture of motives.

It is often linked to a significant change in people's lives such as retirement from paid work or the death of a partner. Many older people volunteer because they are passionate about a cause or are part of a faith community where giving to others is central to their beliefs. For these individuals the key motivator will be a clear demonstration that their contribution is having a positive impact on the cause in which they believe.

- Seeing other people reduces loneliness and isolation
- Taking an interest in the world
- Staying informed
- Improved health
- Brain is active and stimulated
- Staying physically active
- Self respect
- Giving something back
- Continuing to learn and grow
- Friendships
- Respect from others
- Exercising MY choices is empowering

## Difficulties some Older people face volunteering

- Availability and accessibility of transport
- Being patronised by others
- Travelling to meetings when weather is poor
- Fear of crime, particularly at night
- Older people are sometimes sceptical because they remember and have a long perspective about cycles of regeneration and decline so feel their efforts might be wasted
- Some older people find new technology and the changes they represent difficult to respond to eg digital switchover, electronic communications, the internet.
- Poor or changeable health
- Timings/lengths of meetings
- Cost of involvement - older people on low fixed incomes
- Difficulties finding out what is going on with things that affect them

## Why I volunteer...

### Graham

Age UK Befriending Service

Graham is 66 years old and is now retired. Graham lives with his wife and enjoys the time spent with his grand children

Graham's mum was living on her own and Graham was looking after and visiting her on a regular basis. This made him very aware of how isolated elderly people can become living on their own. Graham organised for local people living on their own to come and watch football matches with his mum and created a social evening, where everyone contributed with food and drinks.

"When I was approached by Age UK regarding the befriending service at the Rotherham Show, I agreed to find out what befriending was all about. I was retired and had some time on my hands, my mother had passed away and I decided I would give it a go for one day a week.

I am now befriending for two full days a week, visiting several older people

living in isolation across Rotherham. I have attended many of the social events with service users, supporting Age UK activities and events providing transport and help with clients.

As a befriending volunteer I enjoy listening and hearing the individual life stories from the people I visit. After visiting I often come away with the feeling that I have enjoyed the visit and made someone a lot less lonely. I really enjoy the visits, I leave feeling positive, that it has been a good day, but at the same time a little sad knowing they will not see anyone else for a few days.

I also visit Mr X with early signs of dementia, we would go for a walk, bird spotting, something he enjoyed doing when he was younger. This was the only time he would go out of the house for a walk. He is now living in residential care, but I visit once every two weeks and these visits make a positive difference, the staff at the care home comment how much he enjoys the visit".

**"I leave him with a smile on his face and I have a smile on mine!"**