

# VOLUNTEER

## Welcome to our Volunteer Newsletter Spring/Summer Edition

### Chief Officer's update – July 2020



**Welcome** to our Summer 2020 volunteer newsletter, and for our regular readers, apologies that our Spring edition never saw the light of day – an unfortunate casualty of the Coronavirus pandemic.

As you will all be aware, the crisis came upon us very quickly, as did the 'lockdown' measures implemented by government, leaving us very little opportunity for detailed planning. With the safety of our staff, volunteers and clients of paramount importance, we took the difficult but necessary decisions to close our offices, day-care centre and all group activities, and to switch from home-visiting to telephone-based support for those living alone.

I would like to express my personal thanks to all our staff and volunteers for their patience and flexibility with these new arrangements, and all those who have helped us make the transition to home-based working for our office staff, and the different ways we are supporting our more vulnerable older people, for instance with food parcels, activity packs, and letters from children under the new 'From Me to You' project (see page 8).

We are now at the point of reopening our offices so our team can work more effectively to meet the huge increase in need that has been created by the pandemic, and gradually introducing volunteer support back into the offices. Technically, this has been hard work, and very tricky at times, organising PPE and other safety measures, deploying new IT for home-working, and applying for funding to make up the shortfall created by the closure of services.

We have been fortunate to secure grants from various local and national government initiatives, donors through our national Age UK charity partner, and generous donations from many local residents and organisations – our total to date is £46,680, and we are hugely grateful to everyone who has supported us and continues to do so as we work our way through the crisis.

Many people are talking about what the 'new normal' will look like, and at Age UK Southampton we are exploring how we can adapt and even re-purpose our services and assets to meet new areas of need, whilst staying compliant with official guidance on keeping people safe. We anticipate greater use of technology and using digital solutions for some (e.g. video calls, online resources), and different ways of providing group sessions so that people can continue to enjoy the social side of getting together.

We will keep you up to date with developments and the different ways you can help us support Southampton's older people, but in the meantime, keep well, and stay safe.

**Peter Bennie, Chief Officer**

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# What Volunteers mean to the AUKS Team



## ***Alexa Beck, Information & Advice Team Leader***

Before the lockdown, the Information and Advice Service was heavily dependent on the I & A volunteers who have worked their socks off in recent months in preparation for the IAQP and to get our numbers up. I have to say a huge thank you to everyone and I would say reward yourselves with a holiday...but a few have been on some great holidays since Christmas already to...South Africa, India and Australia. You well-travelled bunch!

The I&A team have done very well and have finally reached the EON target, a week in hand...well done guys! You are on the way to having the most perfect cases recorded!

During the lockdown the I and A team have continued to do their magic but from home this time.

Since the beginning of April the staff and those volunteers that have been working have done 1470 contacts to clients and other volunteers mostly by phone, but also delivering food parcels and updating all our information. A very big well done and thank you to you all.

We are currently moving back into the offices and working out how to get the service fully up and running again to support our the clients.

I love speaking to the I and A volunteers on our weekly zoom meetings which is a great way of keeping up to date with each other, especially as we still have the IAQP looming.



## ***Nadine Costello, Support Services Team Leader***

Greetings Volunteers! Well what can I say?? The past 4 months have been very difficult and scary for all. It has been a trying time for staff here at Age UK Southampton as a lot of changes had to be made. We worked from home during the whole of the lockdown and we had to put all our social groups and events on hold. All our Visiting Volunteers had to replace their home visits with telephone calls instead. We have slowly been re-introduced to working back in the office under the current Government Guidelines, but unfortunately the centre is still closed to the public.

We have all had to adapt to new roles and a new way of working. I have been busy with packing food parcels and delivering them to our most vulnerable clients. This has been an incredible project that I hope will be able to continue over the coming months. We have had a lovely group of volunteers that have given their time selflessly to deliver food parcels and to have a chat with our clients at the front door from a safe distance.

I have also taken on the task of overseeing the Visiting Service and have been busy trying to update the service and to learn the ropes! Before the lockdown, I managed to match a few clients with volunteers which I am so pleased about. However this then had to change to telephone calls instead of home visits, but so far they seem to be a roaring success. I will continue to learn and grow in this role...who doesn't like a new challenge?!?!

Unfortunately we had to cancel our Volunteer Quiz Event which I hope one day soon we can re-schedule for a new date! We did however have a great success with the last volunteer event in January!! A staggering 40 volunteers turned up and we all really enjoyed the afternoon (and the buffet food!!)

Volunteers, I thank you so much for your patience. You have all been selfless throughout this pandemic, and I cannot thank you enough.

Please stay safe, healthy and strong and we will see you one day soon when our centre opens back up.

Love from Nadine xx





***Louise Beer, Business Support Officer***

I originally wrote this report in late February when in the UK we all lived in a different world, so I have amended it accordingly.

Reception has changed to Gateway, which is not only a change of name but also a more efficient way of supporting our clients. Our Gateway team now put client contact details directly on Charity Log and are able to deal with simple enquires directly over the phone and provide the client with all the information that they need. This not only streamlines the process but improves the client experience.

Due to Covid-19 our Volunteers are currently not attending the office.

Before the lockdown we had all 5 days covered but since then we have lost one volunteer who's visa expired at the end of March. Wanda has unfortunately had to return to Trinidad but has written about her time with us for this Newsletter.

When we can get back to the 'new normal' we will have 4 Volunteers covering 3 days Monday to Thursday as detailed below:-

Monday- Deborah started volunteering with us this year and covers all day and she is doing really well. Having worked with the Police in the past, her GDPR skills and knack of getting to the crux of the enquiry quickly are very good.

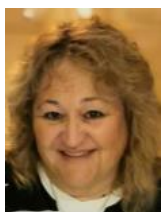
Wednesday- Karen is our latest addition to the team and is keen to get to grips with all that the Gateway service has to offer. It is a steep learning curve and she is doing very well.

Thursday AM- Debbie comes in 9am-12pm and is very good on the telephone. She prefers not to use the computer, but answers all queries with relevant information. These details are then processed onto the system by other members of the team.

Thursday PM- Kay comes in 12pm-4pm. Kay has also started with us recently and has lots of experience working in a Reception role as she worked for Southampton City Council. Kay has also taken to the Gateway Principles and is happy to use Charity Log.

Whether a volunteer uses Charity Log or not, the Gateway system is making a great difference to the speed of our response to clients requiring information from us. The volunteers are a great team which I love being able to support.

When we are in a position to offer our Volunteers a safe environment to work in and they are happy to come back to the office, they will all need various amounts of training and support as they have all had a long break away or only just started to volunteer with us.



***Claire Roberts, Head of Services***

The last few months has seen AUKS' normal service delivery turn on its head as the current pandemic took hold. This crisis has necessitated AUKS adapting to the changing demands to enable us to continue to meet the needs of our clients across the city.

Staff located at our Freemantle Office have been working from home until very recently but have successfully managed to keep many of our services going alongside introducing new ways of supporting some of our more vulnerable older people. Our day care services at Padwell Road, part of the Southampton Living Well city-wide service, have had to be closed but our clients continue to be supported both with 'face to face' (doorstep visits) and/or regular wellbeing phone calls.

# VOLUNTEERING STORIES

If you have a story to feature please email  
[volunteering@ageuksouthampton.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ageuksouthampton.org.uk)



Volunteering at Age UK Southampton has truly been an enlightening and teaching experience. I moved to the UK from Trinidad and Tobago in 2018, to undertake a Master's degree in Gerontology at the University of Southampton. This was done in an attempt to gain a wider understanding and increase my knowledge about the experiences and challenges that older persons encounter globally. My degree was helpful in providing a foundation for my volunteering stint at Age UK Southampton. I began volunteering in July of 2019 and the experience and knowledge I have gained to date has been invaluable in providing a 'hands on' picture of the positive and negative aspects of ageing and the services that can be provided to improve the ageing experience.

My time volunteering at Age UK Southampton has really helped me to grow and develop as a person. I have become more sensitive to the unique and varied needs of older persons and the flexibility and sensitivity that are needed when providing services to a vulnerable yet valuable population. I have become more in tuned with anticipating the needs of our clients. I find myself looking forward to hosting the different groups that meet at the Community Centre and really enjoy interacting with them and contributing to their wellbeing. Providing assistance over the telephone or in person has also provided me with such fulfillment and joy.

Volunteering has really contributed to me improving in general as a human being. Before coming to Age UK I had never really committed to volunteering in any form, but this experience has been a wonderful one. Though some interactions can be deemed saddening and disheartening, most of my experiences have been beautiful, wonderful, and most of all fulfilling.

Thank you Age UK Southampton for the opportunity and for the work that you continue to do. I wish you every success in the future as you try to ensure that ageism and the challenges faced by older persons are eradicated and that older persons enjoy their right to age peacefully, securely and enjoyably.

Blessings!!!

Wanda Williams (Volunteer Receptionist/Gateway)





# What happened before the lockdown??



## Volunteer New Year Thank you Event

What an amazing turn out! We had 40 volunteers turn up to our New Year Buffet, and the feedback we had was very lovely! It was a success because of all of you! So thank you!!  
It was lovely to have old and new volunteers sharing stories and enjoying their time together!



## 'Feel good February'

Age UK Southampton spent a morning at the Solent University with some of our clients hoping to engage with students about how they can be of help to the older community. This was a lovely thing to see: students of all ages, speaking with older people and seeing if they could make a difference in their lives by volunteering. Lots of cake and tea was also had!! All in all a very productive morning. A lovely quote from Maria Hutchinson who helped organise the event: 'We thoroughly enjoyed hosting the morning and look forward to more events in the future. Age UK Southampton makes such a big difference to the lives of the city's older residents. It is great to support you from our University in the heart of Southampton'.



## Innocent Smoothies

They are back for another year!

So let's get knitting!! Each smoothie hat sold, a donation of 25p will go towards Age UK Southampton.

What a great reason to dust those knitting needles off



For a full list of roles available or for an informal chat please  
contact Nadine 023 8036 8636 Ext 201 or email [volunteering@ageuksouthampton.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ageuksouthampton.org.uk)

New Volunteers

- Matthew Bailey-IT Systems & Communication
- Rebecca Craft- Freemantle IT Tutor
- David Le Carpentier-Freemantle & Challis IT Tutor
- Corrina Burner-Freemantle Chums Volunteer
- Karen Derrick-Reception/Gateway
- Angela Donawa-Reception/Gateway
- Deborah Newman-Reception/Gateway
- Kay Jones-SLW Activities Volunteer
- Barry Popejoy-SLW Activities Volunteer
- Siyuan Zhao-SLW Activities Volunteer
- Gwendoline Bishop-SLW Activities Volunteer
- Nicki Gurd-Finance Volunteer/Trustee Treasurer
- Hayley Newman-Food parcel Deliveries
- Jonny Cowell-Finance
- Molly Wray - Digital Support



**Late news.....**

For those Volunteers who have supported the hugely successful Falls Exercise Programme, a review of clients still exercising 3 months after the completion of their session identified that out of 33 clients surveyed, only 9 had experienced another fall and 27 have continued to exercise. All these clients will benefit greatly from this intervention! Thank you for your volunteer input and support.

**Thank you, volunteers,  
for making a difference!**



# What we've been doing to support our clients!

## 'Food parcels'

At the start of lockdown, one of the most requested services was for food! How would people who have to stay in get food? Where would they get their food?

AUKS did not have the provision or resource to start up a shopping service, so we rallied around and the first offer of support came from Hampshire Police. You may remember

Hampshire Police have been amazing with their support for the Christmas

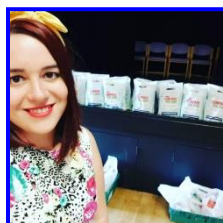


Shoe Boxes, and again with the generosity of their staff donated food which became the start of our food parcel challenge. With food parcels very much in demand, we also

received donations from friends, family alongside a successful application to Fareshare. This has meant that we were now able to support 20 – 30 older people each week. A kind offer from Radian Housing followed and has enabled us to top up supplies. To date we have delivered over 200 food parcels, thanks to donations and the amazing support from Volunteers.

Jessica is a new Volunteer who, in addition to being a key worker, wanted to offer her time and has regularly volunteered to make up food parcels. Our food supplies started off in the foyer .....

We have now moved to the main hall!



Deborah (on the right) is a Reception Volunteer on a Monday and was keen to support

this work whilst she couldn't come into the office. She was quick to rope in her daughter Hayley, who is currently furloughed, as a volunteer too!

## 'Craft Activity Packs'

AUKS was approached by 'Painting Our World in Silver', a charity founded to help combat social isolation and loneliness by bringing older people together to engage in fun and interesting creative activities.

They have produced an 'At Home' Craft Care Package and were keen to distribute it charities like ourselves.



<http://www.silvercharity.org/about-us>



AUKS have distributed over 250 craft activity packs to help ease the

boredom of lockdown thanks to this charity.

*"Thank you to Age UK Southampton for the food parcel and the activity pack. I haven't painted for years, great fun!" (AUKS client)*



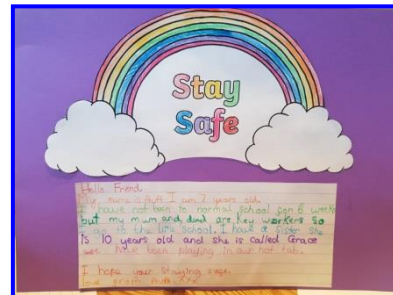
## 'From Me to You'

With many of our clients forced to remain at home, seeing no one, having no family or family far away, having health and mobility issues, this has been a very lonely and difficult time.

Age UK Southampton has teamed up with the Youth Work Team at Southampton General Hospital to distribute letters and messages of support written by young people to our most vulnerable older people in self-isolation. It could be a few lines; it could be a cheery note or a picture, but the aim was to make people smile!

SOUTHAMPTON  
**Children's** Hospital

**Ava wrote.....**



With regular updates on our social media sites, we soon had a great deal of interest in the 'From Me to You' project! A New Milton School, PSHE teacher arranged for all her pupils to write letters as part of their home schooling and kindly made a donation and contributed to the cost of postage!

The letters and pictures have been delightful and have brought not only smiles to our clients, but to us here at Age UK Southampton.

Here is what Ava's Mum wrote....

*"Ava took part in a lovely letter exchange "From me to you" with Age UK Southampton, she created a beautiful letter which was sent out to local elderly people in Southampton.*

*We did not expect a reply, it was simply a way of making those self-isolating feel a little less lonely and to know that people do care.*

*Whilst I was volunteering at Age UK Southampton today, the most amazing envelope came through the post. It contained two cards, a thank you card for Age UK Southampton for delivering a food package and then this one, a response to Ava's letter. Continued..*





*Ava was over the moon, she was so happy that this lady took the time to create such a lovely card, that I know Ava will cherish."In this world of crazy uncertainty, a simple thing of making a picture and writing a letter has made not only an elderly person less isolated but made a 7 year old beam with pride that she is making a difference.*

*Stay safe, be kind.*

*(J Stone, Ava's Mum)*



# Gallery



"Thank you has been good to be thought of and will enjoy the puzzle book"

your week when I had to be to someone up. Joy doing thinking the beach. And gardening especially sun flares! Not just a sun flares it always makes me smile and I love the colour yellow! What do you enjoy doing?

I am also part of a group called P.E.E.T. which stands for Patient Empowerment and Education. Through the group I have managed to complete my bronze Duke of Edinburgh and am now working towards my blue and have met lots of other people! Earlier this year I went to Wetherby and was able to see Mary Kees!



"Excellent surprise has cheered her up and helped with the boredom"

Hope this letter finds you well. My name is Tom and I wanted to write to try and cheer you up. I know this is a difficult time as I am being treated because I have had a transplant. I take one day at a time to keep this lockdown thing. I also try to stay positive. Easier said than done but thinking about happy times in my life helps (family, friends, holidays, birthdays).

Hope you like Mr Mrs Huggable

we will be back to normal soon

We did lots of games before but we learn a very funny song called 'goolie'.

I hope you have a letter. Stay safe.

Best wishes Joe



My Dear Friends, such a big thank you for all the goodies that we have received during this bad time. it has been the highlight of the week for us.

Love and thanks from  
x x x x Pat



Dear Friends,

This weekend our cub camp was changed to a virtual camp due to the corona-virus.

First we all had to make a story mine was a tent in my room. Over the weekend we made breakfast in the garden we made cup cakes in the microwave and we did lots of games too! I don't know if you have ever heard it before but we learnt and sang a very funny song called 'ginger'.

I hope you have enjoyed my letter. Stay safe.

Best wishes Joe



Dear friend, a little bird to bring you some joy! Best wishes,



18.5.2020  
Dear Mary,

Thank you so much for our lovely bags. I will use it every day. I hope you are well and staying safe. Lots of love from Grace and

To Mary,  
I hope you're keeping well. Thank you for my lovely bag. Lots of love from Grace and