

Age UK Westminster Volunteer Newsletter Feb 2021

Dear All,

Welcome to the second issue of our monthly volunteer's newsletter.

UPDATES

New Digital Libraries Services

We have launched a new Digital Library service in Church Street to specifically target older residents in this area of Westminster who wish to learn digital skills with support from a dedicated volunteer. A new Bi-borough Digital Service between us and Age UK K&C has also been introduced for clients who are registered library users who can now borrow a Samsung tablet for up to 6 weeks to learn digital skills.

We are asking our clients' befrienders to find out and refer to us clients who have access to wi-fi connection in their home and would like to take advantage of the Samsung tablet loan offer.

You can also find out about all the other services Age UK Westminster provide [here](#)

Befriending Information Session – 11th March 2021

We are now running a monthly information session for our existing befrienders. Join us via Zoom every second Thursday of the month. The next session will take place on Thursday 11th March from 5pm to 6pm. Confirm your attendance now by emailing Grace Nuttall at grace.nuttall@ageukwestminster.org.uk

Counselling for volunteers

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that we are continuing to face many unprecedented challenges. Working on the frontline today means coming up against increased stresses and anxieties, much of which we are not necessarily great at dealing with. Counselling can offer you the space to process what is happening, how you are experiencing what is happening and can help you to build greater resilience so that you can continue to support our vulnerable clients.



If you are currently volunteering with our charity and would like to be referred for online or telephone counselling, then please get in touch by emailing grace.nuttall@ageukwestminster.org.uk

Weekly Virtual Volunteering Information Drop-in Session

If you are not yet part of our volunteer team and would like to become one of us, we now run a virtual drop-in session every Tuesday, from 11am to 1pm.

This session provides an opportunity for you to have a chat with our Volunteer Coordinator to ask any questions that you may have and for you to get a better idea of which volunteering option might be right for you. Visit our website [here](#) to book your Zoom slot now.

Age UK Free Taxi Transport for over 50s to Vaccination Appointments

Age UKs in North West London are offering a free taxi transport service for residents aged over 50 in the Boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster, Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent who are attending their Covid-19 vaccination appointment. To book your taxi ride please contact Amy Shallon on 07497 188 221 or ashallon@aukc.org.uk

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Older Volunteering

Are you age 65+ and looking to volunteer?

Age UK Westminster offers inclusive volunteering opportunities that older people aged 65+ with all abilities can get involved in. Our older volunteers are currently actively supporting some of our most vulnerable clients who have had tough times with social isolation, made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic. While many make regular phone calls to check on the clients' wellbeing, others are involved in the delivery of emergency food parcels and providing essential food shopping support and prescriptions pick up.

In normal times before the pandemic many of our older volunteers also made weekly befriending home visits to clients, helped at events or organised activities, worked in our charity shop or in our office, providing admin/reception support.

You can find out more about our volunteering opportunities or how to register to volunteer with us by contacting our Volunteer Coordinator, Grace Nuttall on 020 3004 5610 or by emailing grace.nuttall@ageukwestminster.org.uk



Digital Champions

We are looking to recruit a pool of Digital Champions to provide face-to-face, telephone and online training support to our housebound clients and service users who need help using their digital devices. Click [here](#) for more information.

Telephone Befriender

Do you have a few hours spare a week to have a friendly chat with older Westminster residents? Find out how you can make a difference. Click [here](#) for more information



Ad-hoc volunteering opportunities

The following roles would suit anyone looking to give something back to the community without the need for regular commitment.



Grocery Shopping Help Volunteer

As many older residents continue to shield due to health conditions and the risk of contracting Covid-19, we are continuing to see an increase in the number of our service users requiring assistance with their grocery shopping. Help an older person in your Westminster neighbourhood. Click [here](#) for more information.

Emergency Food Parcels Delivery Volunteer

Can you spare an hour on a Thursday between 11am-2.30pm? Why not join our pool of volunteers to help deliver food parcels to those who needs it.

We have been fortunate to secure extra funding to continue providing this essential service to some of our most vulnerable clients until the end of March this year. More info about this role can be found [here](#)

Prescription collection Volunteer

From time to time our vulnerable service users request help from a volunteer to pick up their prescription from their local pharmacy. To provide a rapid response service, we want to make sure that we have local volunteers ready to assist in every corner of the borough. Let us know if you can help with this by emailing grace.nuttall@ageukwestminster.org.uk



Medical Appointment Escorting

A medical appointment can be traumatic for many older people, and to undertake that visit on their own can be even more worrying. To make the whole experience less stressful and more bearable our volunteers accompany older people to hospitals, doctors, dentists and opticians to offer moral support, often sitting with them during the wait, and ensuring that they get home safely at the end. Register your interest in this role by emailing Grace at grace.nuttall@ageukwestminster.org.uk

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The following free eLearning courses are available to our existing volunteers through Grey Matter Learning.

Safeguarding Adult [Read more](#)

Dementia Awareness [Read more](#)

If you would like to take any of these courses, please register your interest by emailing grace.nuttall@ageukwestminster.org.uk

VOLUNTEERING STORY

"I am a telephone befriender with Age UK Westminster. I have been making calls to four, isolated older people who live in Westminster. I call them three times a week for a social chat and to make sure they are safe and well, that they are warm and that they have enough food. Also, to see if they would like any of the many services on offer through Age UK Westminster. I have been calling them more or less since the current pandemic started, way back in March.

As I'm retired, I'm 74 I don't have to think about work so the Lockdowns we have had could have been very difficult to handle. Also, as I had to stop my voluntary work at Charing Cross Hospital because of the virus the time I had on my hands loomed long and empty. Luckily, a friend of mine at Age UK Westminster wondered if I would be interested in telephone befriending. I didn't need asking twice. I knew the benefits such calls could make having run a similar service in one of my paid employments.

It has proved to be as rewarding for me as I think it has for the people I call. To share the different life stories and experiences with them brings back not only memories for them, but also for me. Their lives have been full of happy times and unhappy ones, from painting in Morocco to living in a two up two down during the war with eight brothers and sisters. We have shared sadness's and bereavements, some of them still very raw, but through talking we find a quiet place.

Making the calls has given me a sense of purpose, that I'm giving something back in these troubled times, but mainly I feel less isolated myself, given that I've had to mainly stay at home all this time. Over the past months I've got to know them, their ups and their downs, their families and their worries. It's satisfying when I can help sort out a problem or point them to the people who might help. I feel as though I've achieved something for them. It feels positive.

Making contact with people who are on their own, chatting with them for a while gives me a sense of community, that we are here for each other, particularly as we get older."

We'd love to hear your volunteering stories and to be able to share them across our social media, website and publications. Please let us know if you are interested in sharing your story.

**Age UK Westminster
Beethoven Centre
Third Avenue
W10 4JL**

T: 020 3004 5610 (Mon – Fri, 10am – 4pm)

E: enquiries@ageukwestminster.org.uk

W: www.ageukwestminster.org.uk

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