

# Volunteer News

The newsletter for our volunteers who support unpaid family and friend carers



3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020

Over the next few months whilst our normal work is affected by COVID-19, we will be sending you more regular Volunteer Newsletters. We would appreciate your contributions.

To contact us:

**Call: 01992 58 69 69**

**Email: [volunteer@carersinherts.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@carersinherts.org.uk)**

**Visit: [www.carersinherts.org.uk](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk)**

Carers in Hertfordshire, The Red House, 119 Fore Street, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 1AX.

#### Your Volunteer Team:

Alex Daar, Nicki Bird, Amanda Feron, Jules Josephs and Julie Hayes.



*Making Carers Count*

For the latest advice to carers, please visit our website:

[www.carersinherts.org.uk/taking-care-of-you/coronavirus-guidance](http://www.carersinherts.org.uk/taking-care-of-you/coronavirus-guidance)



## Welcome

Over the last 2 weeks we have enjoyed seeing more and more carers and volunteers on Zoom video sessions. The government has recently made some announcements about the opening of community centres, however it is not yet clear in the guidance how many people can meet in these places. We will continue to work on our risk assessments for starting indoor meetings and discussing these with venues. We want to be sure that our carers, many of whom look after people in vulnerable groups or are vulnerable themselves, feel confident about returning to meetings held by Carers in Hertfordshire.

The Carer Support Hub Groups in Bishops Stortford, Watford, Letchworth, Ware, Stevenage, and Royston have met virtually so far. The carers who attended really enjoyed the sessions and the chance to catch up with other hub members. Some sessions featured a guest speaker, including some where Carer Support Advisors have been able to complete their visits to groups on Zoom as scheduled.

The Keep In Touch Service continues with 1,786 conversations between carers and volunteers completed by phone. As always, we are very grateful for the help and support of our fantastic volunteers. If you have a difficult or distressing call, please do make a cup of tea or coffee and take some time away from making calls. Keep in Touch volunteers can also take advantage of the daily Zoom Support sessions, which you can use to discuss stressful calls or just to debrief on calls you have made. We learn a lot from each other by discussing our experiences and identifying good practice together.

**Zoom Support sessions for KIT callers start at 4pm Monday to Thursday and at 3pm on Friday. Please contact Alex Daar if you want to receive the Zoom link.**

Please read on for updates on Mentor training and Keeping Well Ideas.

*Alex Daar, Volunteer Manager*

## Keeping Well Ideas

Mind in Mid Herts is now running their Get Set to Go programme online. These are free exercise groups with emotional support for people wanting to get back into exercise. Find more on these sessions, including the enquiry form, at this link: <https://www.mindinmidherts.org.uk/support-for-you/stevenage-and-north-herts/get-set-to-go/>. Mind in Mid Herts are also offering free Living Well courses and workshops online. If you are interested in information and tips on making positive changes in your life, please visit [www.mindinmidherts.org.uk/training-and-workshops/courses-workshops/living-well/](http://www.mindinmidherts.org.uk/training-and-workshops/courses-workshops/living-well/) for more details on these courses.

Carers in Hertfordshire have also produced some online content ourselves! Our Dealing with Stress course is now available on YouTube to watch and listen. Please feel free to share this link with any carer that you are in touch with: <https://tinyurl.com/dealing-with-stress>

## New Mentor Training Programme

Would you be interested in joining the Mentoring Team? Carers in Hertfordshire have 70 Mentors from across the county and with a variety of caring roles.

We are looking to recruit new Mentors and will be providing training for the first time by Zoom. The training will be six weekly sessions from 10.30am-12.45pm starting Thursday 23rd July until Thursday 27th August. Please email [julie.josephs@carersinherts.org.uk](mailto:julie.josephs@carersinherts.org.uk) or [alex.daar@carersinherts.org.uk](mailto:alex.daar@carersinherts.org.uk), or phone on 01992 58 69 69 if you are interested in training to be a Mentor. We would be delighted to have a chat if you would like further information.

### **What is a Mentor?**

A mentor is most often someone who has previous or current experience of caring for someone and is interested in volunteering to help others who are new to caring and who would like emotional support or practical information. You will know how exhausting and difficult it can be sometimes when you are caring for someone but just knowing that there is someone who understands and has been through what you are experiencing can be a boost. The time commitment is up to an hour a week but may be less.

### **Training**

A Mentor needs to enjoy meeting other carers, be able to listen to them without judging, and be able to offer objective, practical advice to enable a Mentee to take actions. Full training will be given so that the Mentor understands their role and what might be expected of them before mentoring takes place. The training will include information about sources of support the Mentee might be referred to by the Mentor. Mentors receive ongoing support in their role from Mentoring Co-Ordinators, four Mentor Support training sessions a year and a weekly Zoom Drop In session. All related expenses will be covered.

### **Benefits**

- An opportunity to use your experience and expertise to help others who need it
- Transferable skills that employers like
- An improved sense of wellbeing and achievement

Mentees will also experience benefits such as:

- A feeling that they are not alone and have spaces for them to talk
- An improved sense of wellbeing through the reduction of anxiety and stress
- A different approach to a difficult situation with new sources of support identified

*Jules Josephs and Alex Daar, Mentoring Co-Ordinators*