

Volunteer News

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



29th January 2021

We would be pleased to receive contributions, photos, stories or updates for the newsletter. To contact us:

Call: 01992 58 69 69

Email: volunteer@carersinherts.org.uk

Visit: 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

Coffee and Chat

We are holding friendly, informal Coffee and Chat sessions in January, February and March via Zoom. These will usually be on Wednesdays at 10.30am and Fridays at 2pm. To book a place and be sent the Zoom invite please call the office on 01992 58 69 69 or email contact@carersinherts.org.uk.

For the latest advice to carers, please see our website: www.carersinherts.org.uk/taking-care-of-you/coronavirus-guidance

For keeping well ideas and things to do at home while self-isolating please click here: www.carersinherts.org.uk/taking-care-of-you/coronavirus-self-isolation-activity-ideas



Welcome

Welcome to 2021 and our January Volunteer Newsletter!

In this month's issue, the Bereavement team has shared photos about their Memory Stars project, and we say goodbye to our Mentor Sally, who is moving away. She shares her experience of being a carer supported by Carers in Hertfordshire and then helping and supporting carers herself by becoming a Volunteer Mentor.

Just before Christmas, our volunteers helped to put together and deliver Christmas Boxes to 250 carers. The feedback we have received has been overwhelmingly positive. Thank you to all our volunteers who helped pack and wrap the boxes and to those who drove around the county to deliver them. Here is one of carers, Naomi, receiving her box. She said, "*It was a really lovely and unexpected surprise*".



As we start the New Year, we have hopes of the vaccine beginning to be rolled out across the county. Nicki and I have been asking carers at our hub meetings to tell us something they have planned or thought about doing to increase their wellbeing over the next few months. Ideas such as starting a new exercise class or taking up photography to record the beginnings of Spring have been suggested. If you have ideas to share please get in touch.

*Amanda Feron,
Hub Volunteer Coordinator*

Bereavement Group Memory Stars Project

The bereavement service continues to be busy – not with quite the volume of referrals we were taking last year but a steady flow which means we are working to capacity. In this respect, we are very glad to welcome our new volunteers who have now made their first phone calls.

Over December it was our honour to collect messages of remembrance from those carers who have accessed our bereavement support service during 2020.

61 bereaved carers were given the opportunity to dedicate a star to the memory of the person they lost. Their messages were then hung from our Christmas tree and will be added to a book of condolence. Eventually it is hoped to have this displayed where bereaved carers can read the messages, as we know how important this is for families who have lost a loved one.

The individual stars can be read on our Facebook page at this [link](#).

We will be running further training sessions for new bereavement volunteers later in the year, so please contact the office if you are interested. We would particularly welcome enquiries from men to balance our books a little!

We still hope to re-open the face to face groups later in the year.



Dates for Your Diary

We will be hosting a Volunteer Network Meeting on Friday 29th January from 10.30am-11.30am. At this meeting, Natasha Rehman will be joining us for a 30 minute relaxing Zentangle Art session.



Book a space by calling or emailing the office (contact@carersinherts.org.uk).

We will be hosting the next network meeting on Monday 22nd February. More details will follow in due course but please do pencil the date in.

Admin Volunteer Role

In the light of carers being added to group 6 of the priority list for the COVID-19 vaccine, we are currently seeing a huge increase in carers wanting to register with Carers in Hertfordshire.

At the moment, we have two volunteers, Sue and Jane, supporting our team of Carer Support Advisors with registering new carers. It is now essential and urgent that we expand our volunteer team, as we need to reach carers as quickly as possible. It is a very rewarding role, welcoming carers to the charity, often after they have spent many years caring without any support. You will need some basic level of IT literacy as you will be creating a record for each carer on our systems following a brief phone conversation with the carer. This is purely an administrative role, you will not be giving information or advice. All equipment, training and on-going support will be provided.

If you are interested in volunteering to register new carers or have any questions about the role, please contact Christine Gillham, Information and Carer Planning Service Manager. Her email address is: Christine.gillham@carersinherts.org.uk

Mentor News

One of our mentors, Sally, is leaving Carers in Hertfordshire, as she is moving to Hastings to be nearer to family and to begin a new chapter of her life with her partner.

Sally has been a Volunteer Mentor for five years and in that time has supported six carers with their caring role.

She first contacted Carers in Hertfordshire when she was caring for her mother and started looking for an organisation that could support her. Initially, as she was not based in Hertfordshire, Sally received Carewaves and then started attending training days and seminars. She really appreciated the chance to have her voice and opinions as a carer heard, and found the courses she attended very helpful, particularly the course on Lasting Power of Attorney.



After Sally's mum died, she was very pleased to be offered support for three years, including bereavement support. At the end of her eligibility for the bereavement service, Alex Daar came along to talk about mentoring and Sally said it went from there.

She first mentored carers in similar caring situations to herself and then moved to dementia and mental health carers. She has been able to use her personal life experience to support carers and in this way feels that she has turned difficult experiences into something positive.

When asked what she thinks makes a good mentor, Sally said *"I think a willingness to use your experience as a carer to support others, listening, compassion and not thinking you need to have the answers but to offer options and signposts to the carer."*

She has really enjoyed volunteering as a mentor and she is very grateful for the opportunity of mentoring: *"I have got so much back from everyone I have mentored. I have had terrific support, back up and training from Carers in Hertfordshire and in particular from Alex and Jules."*

Sally has felt part of the Carers in Hertfordshire family and says, *"I will miss all my friends in the office and my fellow mentors - it has been a very positive experience"*.

Sally has lots of plans for her new life in Hastings. She and her partner are looking forward to growing their own vegetables and hope to start keeping bees. On top of that, she has already signed up for a volunteer role with the Ladies Sewing Circle.

Thank you Sally and very best wishes from the Volunteer Team and all at Carers in Hertfordshire at the start of your new adventure!

If you are interested in volunteering as a mentor, please contact Alex Daar for further information (alex.daar@carersinherts.org.uk). Our next mentor training course is starting on Thursday 28th January.

Amanda Feron, Hub Volunteer Co-Ordinator

Safeguarding Training

Please can remember the importance of re-taking our Safeguarding training once a year. We have four sessions coming up, so hopefully there will be a convenient option for you.

Volunteers who have attended the Carers in Hertfordshire Adult Safeguarding course say how interesting they have found it and how much it has built their confidence when supporting carers. The next sessions are on:

Monday 1st February, 1.30pm-3pm

Wednesday 24th February, 10.30am –12pm

Friday 12th March, 2pm-3.30pm

Tuesday 30th March, 10am-11.30pm

To book a place and be sent the Zoom invitation to join the meeting please call the office or email contact@carersinherts.org.uk.

Alex Daar, Volunteer Manager

Volunteer Vacancies

Our latest vacancies are shown on our website. Please click [here](#) to see what is on offer and to read more about each role.

If you are interested in any of our vacancies, please call the office or email volunteer@carersinherts.org.uk for further details.

HAPPY
NEW YEAR!

Keeping in Touch calls

The Keeping In Touch (KIT) team has been busy supporting carers as well as taking a break and recharging their own batteries over the holiday season. During December 2020, volunteers made contact with 371 carers. Thank you for all your hard work and compassion. We know it is really appreciated by the carers the volunteers talk to.

At the end of November, Laura Mitchelmore started with Carers in Hertfordshire as our Keeping in Touch Development Officer. She has worked hard to develop the service and is a supportive and valued addition to our team.

With the help of Julie Hayes, Volunteer Coordinator, we are aiming to double the number of volunteers supporting the KIT team. With the new volunteers who went through training in December and January, we now have 42, with another 5 going through Safeguarding training and DBS checks. Our aim is to have a minimum of 80 volunteers in the KIT team. We are now delivering two training sessions a month to ensure that potential KIT volunteers can start as soon as possible from the point of them offering to help.

We have made a few changes, such as the KIT call forms, and we will shortly be recalling the mobile phones to install an application called Office UC. This app re-routes calls through our landline so the carer being called sees our telephone number rather than "private number", as carers are more likely to answer a call from a trusted and shown number.

Thank you to all the KIT volunteers who are making calls and the KIT admin volunteer who is preparing the KIT call lists. It is lovely to see so many of you at our KIT Zoom sessions. Laura and I are here to support, please do not hesitate to call.

Cate Mitcham ICPS Team Leader