



Communicare in Southampton

...helping neighbours in need

Volunteer Information

Contact Us

**Communicare in Southampton
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Communicare in Southampton

Registered Charity No. 1110427
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Welcome

Firstly, a big thank you for becoming a 'Communiter'.

Without people like you, we wouldn't be able to help relieve the loneliness and distress caused by social isolation. Each year, our volunteers give around 20,000 hours of their time helping their *neighbours in need*.

Some of our volunteers choose to give an hour or two each month, whilst others volunteer almost every day. Communicare promises to work around your schedule as much as possible and offers a range of different activities to ensure there is always a new challenge for you.

The support we give our clients each year includes:

- driving people over 19,000 miles to and from appointments
- spending over 1,000 hours shopping for people
- providing over 5,000 hours of social activity, (lunch clubs etc)
- undertaking around 130 gardening or DIY jobs
- almost 10,000 hours of befriending



What you can expect from us

Induction and initial support

Following your induction, you'll be matched with a client you are interested in helping. We'll arrange an introduction and will check in to see how it went. Please be honest about how it went; it's important to get things right from the start as we want you to enjoy volunteering with us.

Training and social events

Volunteers are invited to attend information sessions two or three times a year. These provide an opportunity to meet other volunteers and discuss how things are going, as well as gaining some insight and understanding into issues affecting our clients, such as dementia or deafness.

Ongoing Support

Our volunteer coordinators are always happy to answer any questions or talk through any problems you are facing with your volunteering. We will contact you occasionally to ask how things are going but please phone or email us with any problems or concerns or if you aren't enjoying your volunteering or just want to talk things through.

We can help you develop new skills

If you would like to try out new things or develop existing skills perhaps as part of developing work experience have a chat with our office team.

We'll reimburse your expenses

Claim as often as you like; weekly/monthly/annually. Communicare currently refunds £0.45/mile and can also reimburse bus fares if you keep the tickets. You can claim parking expenses for visiting our main office.

Insurance

You will be covered by our employers (includes volunteers) and public liability insurance. Please ask if you would like more information.



What we expect of you



You'll help us to help isolated people in Southampton by:

- Showing commitment and working to the best of your ability
- Behaving with integrity and being non-judgemental towards others
- Treating all information disclosed to you as confidential, but ensuring you report anything that you feel puts you or your client at risk
- Attending occasional information sessions or forums where possible
- Keeping us updated:
 - ◆ if anything changes with your availability/ability to volunteer
 - ◆ if you notice any changes in your client's health or circumstance
 - ◆ If you are worried or concerned there has been a misunderstanding
 - ◆ If you lose personal data about clients or other volunteers.
- Thinking it through before you give your personal phone number to clients. If you need to call them you can always withhold your number.
- Claiming travel expenses and keeping a record of time spent
- Informing your motor insurer that you're undertaking volunteer driving
- Accepting and handing in donations from clients
- Spreading the word - Tweet, Facebook post, Instagram about volunteering with us.



Expenses and Log of Hours

It is really important that you keep a record of time spent volunteering and claim your expenses

- Your time is invaluable; we don't want you to be out of pocket too
- It helps us secure funding. Being able to accurately show how much help we give such as how far we drive our clients and how many hours you all give to volunteering are important performance indicators for our funders

How should I keep a record?

We will give you a 'Volunteering Hours and Expenses' sheet which we would like you to complete as a 'time sheet' and so that you can claim expenses. Bus versions are available - please keep tickets.

What can you claim for and how do you claim?

We currently reimburse mileage at £0.45 per mile and for bus fares you incur whilst volunteering, (on receipt of a bus ticket). Car park tickets and toll fees should be paid for by the client if you are directly helping them. You can claim from us if you are not directly helping a client.

To make a claim, simply complete an expenses form and return it to the office. Expenses can be paid by BACS (online bank transfer) cash or cheque.



Don't want to claim? If you would prefer us to keep the money, you can always donate it back to us! And, if you're a UK taxpayer, you can gift aid your expenses back to us, Ask the office for a form which you only need to do once.

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Keeping us updated

Why is it important to keep us updated about the people you help?

It is really useful for us to have up-to-date information about the welfare of clients, as you are often their only link with the outside world.

It is important for your own and other volunteer's safety to tell us about any problems you encounter or concerns you have about problems that may develop.

You may be your client's only visitor

For example, if you notice a change in a client's physical health or a deterioration of their memory, we can feed that information back to family members or other carers.

For our statistics

The number of hours you spend and miles you drive whilst volunteering are an important performance indicator for our funders.

How to keep us updated

- Please fill in your expenses sheet whether or not you would like to claim the expenses as this is your main record of volunteering
- Please phone or email the volunteer coordinators to let us know about any changes which affect you or the people you help

Please also tell us if your own circumstances change!

Please let us know if things change in your circumstances such as your availability, you move house or you need to take a break from volunteering.





Data Protection

At Communicare we take our responsibilities to look after personal data seriously. Personal data is everything which can identify someone (e.g. their name) or which can be used to identify someone.

Top tips for keeping information safe

Treat all information about people as private. You can share any information with volunteer coordinators but be careful about sharing information with other people such as client's neighbours or family. It's fine to tell a close friend or relative you are visiting 'Bob at 216 Ramsey Road' and should be back by 8pm but avoid giving unnecessary details.



Keep all information about clients and other volunteers safe & secure. Make sure that computers are password protected and phones with client details on are kept locked. If you have information such as names and addresses written down don't leave them lying around where someone else could find them or where they could get lost and end up in the wrong hands.



Only keep information for as long as you need it. Destroy information for clients you are no longer helping. If you get information via emails or text delete old messages regularly. Please destroy old expenses claims once you no longer need them. Try to have a 'what if this was stolen' attitude – if your phone was stolen and information about clients misused could we justify you having that information? If you last helped them 2 years ago we probably couldn't.



Destroy information securely when you don't need it. Shred information on paper or return it to the office for us to shred. Ensure emails/text messages are deleted. When you need to replace your computer make sure the hard drive is wiped clean.



Tell the office team if any information we have given you about clients or volunteers is stolen or lost in a public place where it could fall into the wrong hands.

Want to know more? Please contact the for our full policy.



Gifts and Client Donations

Gifts from Service Users

Many of our services users like to give small gifts to say thank you to volunteers. We recognise that this is a normal part of friendships but please observe the following guidelines to protect yourself from allegations and our reputation as a charity.

It's very important that clients don't think they are paying you for our services.

- **Don't accept cash gifts for yourself.** If someone wants to give you cash please say 'I can't take it for myself but if you like I can pass it on to Communicare as a donation from you'.
- Please **do accept donations for Communicare.** Many of the people we help can afford to give a small donation especially for transport and shopping help and this helps to pay for the service we provide. Please put the donation in an envelope or make a note of it and pass it on to the office as soon as possible either in person or as a bacs transfer. We need to know the name of the donor, date of donation and amount. Our insurance only covers you for small amounts of money so please don't let donations pile up!
- **Don't accept gifts which might be valuable** without discussing it with our office team first.
- Try to avoid getting into a pattern of accepting gifts every time you see a client.

In the same way please **don't give regular or valuable gifts to your client or lend them money.** You may be being generous but it could create the impression that you are trying to make them dependent upon you.





Keeping Yourself Safe

Your safety is very important to us. Whilst the risk of serious harm is very low we want you to be as safe as possible.

Please contact us with any concerns for yourself or other volunteers.

Keeping yourself physically safe

- **Trust your instincts:** If something feels wrong or makes you feel uncomfortable, make an excuse and leave. Please tell the office team.
- **When volunteering alone,** let someone know where you are going and when you are expected back, especially if you are going somewhere new or after dark.
- **Take care when lifting** e.g. shopping bags: If at all possible, attend our manual handling sessions or ask for our online training module. You should not be lifting people or bearing client's weight; for example pulling them out of a car.
- Please take extra care when visiting clients in the **evening or in an unfamiliar area** - make sure you know the way to a busy and well lit place such as a shop in the unlikely event you need it.
- **DIY/practical help:** Please see the page on 'DIY' and Decorating.

Keeping yourself emotionally safe

- Remember **you can't do everything** your client may need/want and you're not expected to be there for them all the time.
- **Do set 'boundaries'** around what you are and aren't prepared to do for the people you help and how long you are able to give them. Be prepared to say 'no'. We are happy to help your client understand what help and support you can or can't give.
- **Think before you give** your client your phone number or address - do you want them to contact you at home? What if they call you late in the evening? We strongly advise you to get to know them first.
- If your client or a relative is at all **threatening or aggressive** (including verbally) please leave and let us know as soon as possible.



Keeping Clients Safe

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means making sure adults and children are protected from harm and abuse. This is such an important topic you will be given a separate information sheet about it.

In brief if you have any concerns contact the office as soon as possible. In an emergency dial 999.

If it isn't an emergency but you think it is too urgent to wait until the office is open (e.g. it is a Friday evening and you don't think it can wait until Monday) contact the Southampton Council's safeguarding team: 023 8023 3344

Welfare Officer

If you have a concern about the behaviour of a member of staff or another volunteer and do not want to discuss it with office staff you can contact the Welfare Officer:

- **Write** to *The Welfare Officer* c/o Communicare in Southampton
- **Phone** 023 8021 6016 and ask for the Welfare Officer to phone you

Inviting Clients to your home

Please talk to the office team if you would like to invite your client to your home. This should only be in exceptional circumstances because your DBS check doesn't cover you for activities carried out in your home.

Taking other people to visit your client

Please talk to the office team if you would like to take someone else, who isn't a Communicare volunteer, to visit your client.





What if there is a problem?

In the unlikely event that something goes wrong whilst you're volunteering please contact us as soon as possible

Problems you might encounter when volunteering could include

- Being unable to meet a volunteering commitment
- Having concerns about the welfare of a client – this could be a concern that they aren't coping as well as they were or possibly a concern that someone else is doing something which could be hurting the client.
- Having concerns about the behaviour of a client or about their mental or physical health.
- Being asked to do something you don't wish, or feel you shouldn't, do
- An accident or incident occurring whilst you are supporting a client
- A misunderstanding with a client or one of their friends or relatives.
- Thinking you might have breached confidentiality or lost personal data
- Not enjoying your volunteering, perhaps because it isn't quite what you expected or you feel you don't have enough in common with your client.

Unless it's an emergency, don't try to resolve problems by yourself.

Instead, please call the office and ask for advice.

If something happens during office hours, Mon-Fri 9am to 5.00pm, call:

023 8021 6016

In an emergency outside of office hours call emergency services



Volunteer Roles



The next section of this booklet gives more detailed role descriptions for each task.

Here you'll find information about what to expect when befriending a client at home, helping with transport, assisting with shopping or helping on a more practical level with gardening, decorating or DIY.

Volunteering Roles - Befriending

Good to know

All clients referred for befriending first have a **home assessment** to ensure that their needs fall within Communicare's boundaries of support.



What to expect

- You'll be sent details of clients who would like a befriender, this could be being visited at home or helped to get out and about in the community, for example going out for coffee or to play pool.
- You can then select one or two you'd like to meet
- We'll arrange an introduction with your client
- Then it's up to you and your client. Whether you play a weekly game of scrabble or just pop in for a chat, you'll make a huge difference.

To be noted

- We are sometimes asked to help young families for example a parent with twins and another young child.
- Befriending simply means *being a friend* so, feel free to suggest playing a game, doing a craft or anything you are both interested in.
- If you are taking your client in your car you must inform your insurance
- Ensure visits don't last too long (ideally 1-2 hours). Clients can get very tired, particularly if they're older.
- Be clear from the outset what you're prepared and not prepared to do. One of the coordinators can help you with this.
- You'll not be asked to (and nor should you *under any circumstance*) provide your client with any personal care, medication or legal/financial advice.
- Please let us know if you are asked to use a key safe or hold a key.
- Get to know your client before giving your personal details. Instead, ask them to contact the office.

Volunteering Roles - Transport

What to expect

- We'll ask when you're typically available and take details of your car (can you take a walker/wheelchair, for example)
- When a client has a transport need that you might be able to fulfil, we'll be in touch to see if you can help
- Some clients will be able to wait outside others will need you to go to their door and may a little help getting to and from the car.
- Some clients will need help getting in and out of the car. It is important you don't put yourself at risk of injury. We have some equipment such as car canes which may help but please let us know if someone is struggling.
- If you are helping with hospital transport we can give you a volunteer driver parking permit which will give you free parking at the hospitals.
- Please accept donations from clients and bring them back to the office whenever you're passing or by BACs
- Make a note of the dates, postcodes and mileage of all your trips. You'll need this to make a mileage claim.

To be noted

- You must ensure your car is insured for volunteer driving, taxed and MOT'd.
- You should not accompany clients into medical rooms, unless previously arranged.
- You may be asked to give a client your contact number if it's a return trip. This is at your discretion, but instead you could always wait for them outside or agree a pick up time.





Volunteering Roles - Shopping

Good to know

Communicare volunteers shop both for and with clients.

If you're taking a client shopping please see "Volunteering Role - Transport".

What to expect

- You'll normally go to the client's house to pick up their shopping list and money. Alternatively you might get their list over the phone and be reimbursed later.
- You cannot use a client's debit or credit card but we may agree you can use a pre-paid card.
- You must confirm the items on their shopping list with them and agree any substitutions they will accept if an item is not available.
- Ensure you get a receipt for the goods you buy.
- When you deliver the shopping, either count out any change or, if you've paid for the shopping, clearly explain how much they owe you.
- Some clients may need help with unpacking their shopping and putting it away. Offer but don't insist.
- We are happy to give you a receipt book if you would like one.



To be noted

- In the unlikely event there are any disputes over money, you should contact us on: **023 8021 6016**
- If a client asks you to stay for a drink afterwards, you should feel free to. This is your choice; you can always make a polite excuse.



Volunteering Roles - Practical Help

Good to know

We offer the type of help a reasonably competent 'DIYer' would do in their own home.

What to expect

- We'll contact you when we receive a request you might be able to meet
- We'll arrange a time for you to call in and have a look at the job
- If you feel it is too much for you to do alone, or that it's outside of your skill set, please let us know rather than attempting it.
- You can then arrange a suitable time to carry out the work or ask us to.
- Any materials should be paid for by the client.



To be noted

- **Please ensure you follow all health & safety instructions** on power tools etc.
- Please don't attempt any work involving high ladders or scaffolding, anything under floor level or more than 5m above floor level.
- Please don't attempt anything that needs a qualification such as plumbing or electrical works. Even if you are qualified you will not be covered under our insurance.
- Before starting advise the client if there is any risk of damage.
- Ensure that you leave the client's premises clean and tidy, agree beforehand how waste will be disposed of.
- **Remember to let the office know when a job is complete.**

Volunteering Roles - Lunch Clubs, Events and Office Support

Good to know

We hold fundraising events and also events such as tea parties for our clients. We also help run regular lunch clubs.

What to expect

- If you fancy volunteering as part of group ask about our regular lunch clubs. Volunteering as a member of a team can help you gain confidence and experience as well as helping people feel part of their community.
- We have lots of different jobs to be done at events and tea parties so let us know if you prefer to be busy in the kitchen, selling raffle tickets or chatting with clients over a cuppa. We are always grateful for help with all or part of an event so do offer what you can.
- We will let you know about events through our newsletters and email updates so do offer if you are available to help.
- If you are a keen crafter or baker we are often on the look out for things to sell at events so do let us know.
- Our valued office volunteers help us with admin tasks, as well as phoning clients and volunteers to help keep in touch.

To be noted

- If you are helping at a lunch club you will be given your main induction by the lunch club team.



Volunteering Roles - Homecoming

Good to know

Our Hospital Homecoming scheme provides short term help for people coming out of hospital who live on their own.

What to expect

- We'll send you details of people who live near you who are coming out of hospital saying what help they need. You can let us know if you are free to help.
- You'll not be asked to (and nor should you *under any circumstance*) provide your client with any personal care or help taking medication.
- You cannot use a client's debit or credit card to get cash or shopping but we may agree you can use a pre-paid card.
- If you are asked to get shopping you should confirm the items on their shopping list with them and agree any substitutions they will accept if an item is not available. Ensure you get a receipt for goods you buy.
- We have offered help with light cleaning but you are not expected to spring-clean their whole house!
- Help with laundry should be limited to getting clean laundry out of the machine, dirty or soiled laundry needs to be put in the machine by the client as there is a risk you could pick up an infection.

To be noted

- Help through the homecoming project is expected to be short term. Please let us know if you feel people will need ongoing help.
- In the unlikely event there are any disputes over money, you should contact us on: **023 8021 6016**
- If a client asks you to stay for a drink or chat, you should feel free to. This is your choice; you can always make a polite excuse if you don't have time.