



Communicare in Southampton

...helping neighbours in need
Charity no. 1110427

Volunteering FAQs

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with us. We've produced this fact sheet to answer many common questions. If you would rather chat face to face, over the phone or via zoom just contact us to arrange an appointment on 023 8250 0050 or volunteer@communicareinsouthampton.org.uk

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.

Who are we?

Communicare in Southampton is a good neighbours scheme. Our main aim is to reduce isolation and loneliness by acting as good neighbours. In 2021 we are celebrating our 30th birthday.

We have a friendly staff team to support you. The staff team manage referrals, recruitment of new volunteers and match volunteers with people who need help. We are always happy to answer questions or help you with any issues you encounter with volunteering. Our office hours are 9-4 Mon – Friday. We don't have an out of hours 'on call' system but will advise you what to do if you encounter problems out of hours.

Who do we help?

We help lonely and isolated people in the city of Southampton (or occasionally just across the city boundary). We mostly help adults although we do sometimes help young families in particular circumstances such as isolated parents with twins. Many of the people we help are older and physically frail, other people may be facing challenging circumstances or living with mental health challenges.

Who can volunteer with Communicare?

Communicare was originally founded by Shirley Baptist Church and our Christian roots and church links remain important to us. At Communicare in Southampton we welcome volunteers from all faiths and none and simply ask that volunteers are able to acknowledge Communicare's Christian roots and are comfortable with the fact that many of our volunteer face to face support sessions take place in church buildings.

How much time do I have to give?

Some roles require a regular commitment, other volunteers help as and when they can. We ask that when you apply you expect to be able to volunteer for a minimum of 2 hrs a month for at least 6 months. (This doesn't include volunteering for one off projects or events.) Please contact us if you wish to volunteer for a shorter period in any role other than events and we will see if we can accommodate you.

Students: (including volunteering as a course requirement)

We welcome students as volunteers. Most of our volunteering opportunities are about building relationships therefore we cannot provide short term opportunities for roles such as telephone or face to face befriender. If your course requires a certain amount of volunteering please let us know when you apply so we can let you know whether or not we are likely to be able to accommodate this. We cannot carry out DBS checks for required volunteering so you wouldn't be able to volunteer in a role which needs a check.

Young people aged 16-18: most of our volunteering is unsupervised and much takes place in people's own homes. Under 18s cannot volunteer in people's homes, however young people who have left school (or

are in Yrs. 12 &13) may be able to be telephone befrienders and in some circumstances help with shopping. They can also help at events and lunch clubs.

How we support you

Before you start volunteering you will have an induction meeting which will include information about key policies. You will be given a volunteering booklet. We can do these by zoom or face to face.

Volunteers are encouraged to take part in regular forums which include training on relevant areas including safeguarding and manual handling. We try to ensure that these forums are held in different parts of the city and at different times to make it easier for volunteers to attend.

We also keep in touch through our monthly newsletter.

At Communicare in Southampton we are always happy to talk to you or answer questions. At the moment we can't have a physical 'open door' policy but we are happy to chat to you over the phone or by email. In 'normal times' we hold regular drops ins so you can meet us face to face.

How do I become a volunteer?

Many of the people supported by Communicare in Southampton are vulnerable and so it is extremely important to us to ensure that we recruit volunteers who will not put them at risk.

References: You will need to give us two referees who can give you a character reference. These need to be people who have known you for 2 years (occasionally we can accept 1 year) and are not related to you or in a romantic relationship with you.

If possible one of the referees should be someone who knows you in a **professional capacity**, e.g. they may be your line manager at work, or a tutor from college. If you don't work or are retired please try to think of someone who knows you through another organisation, perhaps somewhere else you have volunteered or a neighbour you have helped or a friend who is a professional such as a teacher, nurse, or religious leader.
Please talk to us if you're not sure who to ask.

ID and DBS Checks

For some roles we will do a DBS check. If you have any questions about how we will use this information, please ask to see our DBS and Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders Policy. If we are not doing a DBS check we will ask you to show us ID.

Please note we will need to see you in person twice to do a DBS check. These ID checks normally take place during working hours at our office. We can sometimes arrange to do a check in the early evening or on a Saturday.

