



Our volunteers now connect with 100 carers

Our 'Community Connect' service was launched in the summer of 2019 with the aim of reducing social isolation by providing an opportunity for carers to speak to one of our team of volunteers on a regular basis.

When the country entered the first Covid lockdown in March 2019 there was a considerable impact on carers. This ranged from shielding the person they were caring for, to taking on more caring tasks and living with much more pressure, stress and anxiety. In addition many carers were unable to physically meet up with other people which increased the feeling on isolation.

So, we decided to develop the role of Community Connect volunteers to become more of a 'listening ear' and a 'safe space' for carers to talk to an understanding person about how they were really feeling. They also keep a careful lookout for carers who are struggling with their caring role and ensure they can access additional support to maintain their resilience.

We also decided to expand our team of 5 volunteers, and are delighted to announce we now have 26 volunteers phoning over 100 carers living in Sheffield on a weekly or fortnightly basis. The calls usually last about 30 minutes and provide essential practical and emotional support, with one carer telling us "Helen is FABULOUS and a true gem" and a volunteer reporting "John was massively grateful for my call and wants me to call again next week".

There is a genuine mix of experience and backgrounds in the team, with ages ranging from early 20s into the 80s. Some are students, some are unemployed and some are semi or fully retired. All are good listeners and good communicators who enjoy sharing their experiences and using their existing skills or developing new skills.

Pauline Kimantas, Chief Executive at Sheffield Carers Centre commented: "Volunteers are at the heart of our organisation. Their input benefits us enormously and the time they give goes a long way to help us support the thousands of unpaid carers living in Sheffield. We're delighted the way this team has grown over the past year and how they have helped develop our 'Community Connect' service and supported individual carers."

[Click on this link for details of volunteer roles on our website.](#)

