

Community Action: Bedfordshire Luton Volunteering Newsletter

22 July 2020

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Community Action Bedfordshire is the accredited Volunteer Centre for Central Bedfordshire and Luton.

You are receiving this newsletter because you have registered on our online volunteering platform, Volunteer Connect, and opted-in to be part of the Volunteer Bank.

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Volunteering – what can I do?

Volunteering has been valued more than ever during the past few months, with local, national and international recognition of just how valuable volunteers can be to support their communities. Whether you were volunteering prior to the pandemic or have recently started volunteering over the past few months and want to continue volunteering in some capacity moving forward, we want to provide an overview of the huge variety of volunteering opportunities that are available.

Whatever your motivation, interests, skills, experience, or passion there is a volunteering opportunity to suit everyone!

We are here to help if you don't know what to do or where to start your search!

Admin **advice & guidance** animals **befriending & buddying** campaigning **cooking** community work **customer service** driving **environment & conservation** events & stewarding **finance & accounting** first aid & emergency services **fundraising** gardening **general & helping** governance & trusteeships **heritage** hospitals & hospices **IT, technology & websites** languages & translation **marketing** mentoring **practical & DIY** research **retail & charity shops** sport & coaching **supporting children/young people/families/vulnerable adults/offenders/women/older people** teaching & training **volunteer management** youth work

[Click here](#) to search current volunteering opportunities in Central Bedfordshire and Luton on our online volunteering platform, Volunteer Connect. To express an interest in an opportunity, you will need to [register](#) and create a profile on Volunteer Connect.

When you register, tick the "Volunteer Bank" option to receive regular our volunteering e-newsletters. Contact Kay and Karen on volunteer@cabeds.org.uk for support.

Covid-19 volunteering update

See below current volunteering opportunities from a variety of organisations across Bedfordshire. Some roles below may be temporary to support organisations or individuals during the current COVID-19 crisis, whilst other opportunities may be ongoing, and therefore may require a regular commitment.

Organisations currently recruiting volunteers:

- **Age Concern Luton**
- **Sight Concern Bedfordshire**
- **Level Trust (Luton)**
- **Stopsley Community Garden**
- **NOAH Enterprise**
- **Keech Hospice Care**

Please scroll down to find out more!

Luton volunteering opportunities

Age Concern Luton

Age Concern Luton is Luton's largest charity working with older people and has been helping older people and their carers get the services they need, improve their overall quality of life, receive timely practical help, make their voices heard and make a contribution to their communities for 20 years!



During the COVID-19 outbreak, Age Concern Luton's staff and volunteers are working hard to provide practical support and also emotional support to older people in Luton by keeping older people connected to others through weekly phone calls helping to reduce people's feeling of isolation and showing them there are people who care about them.

Telephone Befriending Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to provide company to older people. We all know how lonely this time can be, so if you like to talk or like to listen, please get in touch! This is a home-based volunteer role (therefore you don't have to live in the Luton area) which can be tailored around your schedule and other commitments! If you are interested in this role please email: volunteering@ageconcernluton.org.uk

Sight Concern Bedfordshire

Do you want to make a purposeful contribution to your community and prove a real life line to isolated visually impaired people? An estimated 6,400 people living in Bedfordshire and Luton are affected by moderate to severe sight loss. Sight Concern Bedfordshire support people of all ages, backgrounds, cultures and communities through a wide range of tailored services and support. If you have an hour or so to spare every week they would love to hear from you. They have a variety of volunteer roles however, due to the current pandemic, their face to face



services aren't operating at present and only their telephone befriending service is actively recruiting volunteers.

Telephone Befriender

Volunteers provide a telephone based befriending service with a scheduled weekly call to chat about life, the universe and everything providing much needed company, connectedness, and information to people who are often isolated and alone. Calls which can be done from home, last for approximately 20 mins so you may speak to 3 or 4 people in one session. Volunteers will receive full visual awareness training before starting and the recruitment process and training is currently taking place on-line using Zoom technology. So, if you are patient, a good listener with an interest in the circumstance and lives of others we would love to hear from you!

[Click here](#) to go to Volunteer Connect and search "Sight Concern" or click on the role title above.

Level Trust (Luton)

The Level Trust help families overcome the costs of education so all children in Luton have the chance to love learning. They help children by providing gift cards for school shoes and coats, running a Uniform Exchange in The Mall, giving out Learn @ Home resource packs full of the things children need for homework, and running a summer school packed with exciting and enriching experiences. Children feel more included, more confident, and enabled to attend school more – which all adds up to a brighter future.



Level Trust's annual **SMASH** summer programme is running from 20th July – 28th August offering 240 free places for children aged 8-12 to take part in the SMASH 2020 summer programme. SMASH is going 'remote' this year, using a series of activity packs, food hampers, handwritten letters through the post, art displays and competitions to engage children in meaningful activity. If you would like to volunteer and help to make a real difference to children, young people and their families who are experiencing financial hardship and the many challenges of Covid-19 then read on to find out how you can support this amazing programme!

Delivery Volunteer - It all starts with you! We need to deliver 240 packs to family homes 20th – 24th July ready for SMASH to start on 27th July. Each delivery will involve saying a brief hello to the parent/carer whose child is taking part, giving them their packs and a quick run through about what is inside and answering any questions they may have. There will be a couple of forms for the parent to sign.

Competition Judge - You will have the joy and hard job of judging all the amazing entries to the SMASH competition. There will be a 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize and all children will receive a £30 voucher to spend on something that supports their learning.

Letter Writing Volunteer - You will be our ears, eyes and mouth, sending and receiving letters, there will be competition entries and post cards from children that tell us how their SMASH activities are going. Your first letter will welcome them to SMASH and remind them you are looking forward to receiving their first envelope. After receiving each envelope from them you will be writing back to, encourage, praise and acknowledge their competition entries and what they have told us about on their

postcards. **This role would suit someone with experience of working with children ideally in an educational capacity (e.g. teachers, youth workers, teaching assistants with DBS and Safeguarding training).**

Administration – A volunteer is needed to work alongside the SMASH project manager to support with administration, such as sorting out mail received from children and sending this out to Letter Writing Volunteers.

If you are interested in any of the above roles, please contact Phyl Rainey ASAP on 07921 687178 or by email: phyl.rainey@leveltrust.org

Level Trust - Uniform Exchange

When money is tight at home, a child might not have the uniform and equipment they need for school. They are unlikely to be able to do fun things in the school holidays and they are more likely to suffer with mental health problems and low self-esteem. They can feel embarrassed about making friends because they feel 'different' and they can have little hope for the future.



The Uniform Exchange, set up like a high-end shop, provides free school uniform to children in Luton. Any family can use it by swapping items they have finished with for items they need. But it's more than somewhere to get uniform; it's somewhere children can play and families can get emotional support from our friendly team.

[Uniform Exchange Retail Volunteer](#)

We are looking for motivated and reliable volunteers who are passionate about and committed to making a positive difference to children living in poverty in Luton. Our volunteers are friendly and work well together. Volunteers will sort stock; checking its quality, washing and drying and putting uniform in the right place. Volunteers will pack items for families; you'll need to be on your feet for most of the shift; carrying small crates of clothing and making trips along the corridor to the stockroom.

Keeping You Safe - In response to COVID-19, we will operate a click and collect service for families to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and customers. Most of our work will take place in the stockroom which is not accessible to members of the public. We will adhere to physical distancing and provide PPE and hygiene products appropriate to the setting.

The Uniform Exchange is open: Monday to Thursday and Saturday 10am to 2pm

[Click here](#) to register your interest on Volunteer Connect.

Stopsley Community Garden

The Stopsley Community Garden opened to the public around 6 weeks ago with the aim to provide a quiet space for anyone in the community to come and sit, meet, chat, relax and reflect, among growing flowers and vegetables. The aim is also for people to feel ownership of the garden by helping in, or bringing things to the garden, as well as being able to take away produce grown there.



Activities are currently in Phase 2 with work on a covered seating area just starting. Clearing and levelling land, creating hardstanding and erecting a wooden structure is currently in progress. Phases 3 and 4 would see wildflower and children's activity spaces.



The community garden has been created by volunteers and is maintained by volunteers and members of the community. It is open every day between 9 am – 5pm and all they ask is for all visitors to follow the guidelines on the noticeboard. Enjoy the space, bring some chairs and relax. The garden is currently limited to no more than 6 at a time due to government guidance.

Location: Next to Stopsley Baptist Church, St Thomas' Road, Luton, LU2 7XP

To find out more or get involved, visit the garden or contact community@stopsley.net
https://www.facebook.com/Stopsleycommunitygarden/?ref=page_internal

This role is coming to Volunteer Connect soon!

NOAH Enterprise

NOAH Enterprise is a Charity that has been working with the most disadvantaged in Luton for over 25 years providing welfare, training, housing advice and support, and running a social enterprise. NOAH is reliant upon the continued support of our fantastic volunteers. We have a wide range of volunteer opportunities, one or more of which might appeal to you. For many of our volunteering roles, no previous experience is required but full training is provided.



We are looking to re-open our shops from 15 June and to be able to start involving volunteers in the Academy again in the new academic year. We have **15 different volunteering opportunities** across our Welfare Centre, Academy, Furniture Store and other retail locations so something to hopefully suit everyone!

Welfare Centre: Kitchen Assistant/Soup Kitchen Assistant/Games & Activities Engager
Academy: Teaching & Classroom Assistant/Interpreter/Mentor/Administrator/Cleaner

Social Enterprise (Retail) - Receptionist & Telephonist/Booking Coordinator/Internet Sales & Sourcing Agent/Van Drivers Mate/White Goods Furniture Restoration/Car Boot Stall Holder/Personal Shopper

[Click here](#) to go to Volunteer Connect and search "NOAH".

Keech Hospice Care



Retail Shop Volunteer

Keech Hospice Care shops across Bedfordshire and Luton are looking for volunteers!

Our fun and friendly team of retail staff and volunteers raise £1.4million each year to support children and adults with life limiting conditions. Keech Hospice Care have 33 shops across Beds, Bucks and Herts.

Retail Tasks include:

- assisting and serving customers, providing a high standard of customer service
- helping with stock processing, including sorting, steaming, cleaning, pricing and hanging of donated goods- cash handling and accurate operation of the till
- assist with keeping the shop premises clean and tidy
- positively contributing to team working in the shop
- lifting, moving and displaying retail items

[Click here](#) to visit the Keech Hospice Care website for more information.

[Click here](#) to go to Volunteer Connect and search "Keech Hospice Care".

Training

Alzheimer Society – Free Dementia Friends Information Sessions

Living with dementia at any time brings challenges for those with the condition and the people close to them. Many face stigma and isolation in everyday life and the coronavirus pandemic is making things much harder.



Now more than ever, it is important that individuals get the help and support they need. If you are already volunteering and coming into contact with people with dementia then it's important to have an understanding of how it can affect someone and the challenges they and their carers might face, in order to know how to best support them.

Becoming a Dementia Friend simply means finding out more about how dementia affects a person – and then, armed with this understanding, doing small everyday things that help. Anyone can become a Dementia friend so if you would like a better understanding of dementia then you can book onto one of the new Alzheimer's Society free Dementia Friends online webinar or livestream sessions by [clicking here](#).

For more information please contact Annlouise at: annlouise.taylor@alzheimers.org.uk

Keeping in touch

Keeping in touch

Please let us know if you have continued volunteering during Covid-19, or whether you have taken on any additional volunteering relating to Covid-19 over the past few months.

The Volunteer Centre team are currently working remotely and providing support via phone and email. Please get in touch if you would like help or advice on any of the following:

- Using Volunteer Connect
- Volunteering during Covid-19
- Searching for volunteer opportunities
- Contacting an organisation for an update
- Any other volunteering-related questions!

Using Volunteer Connect during Covid-19: Please note that during the current Covid-19 situation, some organisations may take longer to reply. Many organisations may have paused their volunteer recruitment due to working remotely and having to adapt their services. We are working with organisations to try to keep Volunteer Connect as up to date as possible but we thank you for your patience and understanding. If you have any queries, please contact us on volunteer@cabeds.org.uk.

Contact us on: volunteer@cabeds.org.uk

Kay Henderson – Volunteer Centre Manager | Karen Hall – Volunteering Adviser

Staying safe

Keeping Safe whilst Volunteering

Always follow the Government [stay alert and safe social distancing guidance](#) even when you are helping others or volunteering.

If you are returning to a volunteer role, always discuss the individual risks and talk to your volunteer manager about the measures that have been put in place to keep volunteers safe.

If you are helping those who are self-isolating, please remember to follow the government guidelines to ensure you are only spreading kindness and not anything else.

To help keep yourself and others safe, please act as if you are a potential carrier of the virus and take all practical measures to prevent passing it on to others more vulnerable.

Please remember:

- Only volunteer if you feel well enough, and are not self-isolating
- Always follow [government social distancing guidelines](#)
- Do not place yourself in positions where you may feel unsafe
- Always adhere to the latest government advice - [click here for more details](#)

Government - Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers

If you are travelling to and from your volunteering then please ensure you are familiar with the latest [Government guidance](#) on how to travel safely during the outbreak including travelling by public transport and other means. Other guidance includes how to wear a face mask, how to make a face mask, who does/does not need to wear a face mask and what to take with you if you are walking or cycling. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#travel-safely-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

The British Red Cross have prepared [short video and quiz](#) to help you volunteer safely. This newsletter was produced on 22/07/2020 and follows government recommendations correct at this time. Please keep checking the [GOV website](#) for official advice and the latest information.

Additional information

Voluntary and Community Sector Job Vacancies

Level Trust - Delivery and Family Worker - £10.50 per hour - Length: Six months, with scope for extension - location: Uniform Exchange, The Mall, Luton, and various locations around Luton. Level Trust is looking for an active and organised Delivery and Family Worker to ensure children receive school uniform and learning resources. The ideal candidate should be passionate about and committed to, making a positive difference to children living in poverty in Luton. We are looking for a friendly and empathetic person to join our team who is comfortable working with people from diverse backgrounds. The time that this post demands vary during the year. It is ideal for somebody with more time to give in the summer. It is anticipated that during August and September the role will require 40 hours per week after which demand will be gauged on a week by week basis. This post is ideal for somebody who is self-employed or considering taking up self-employed status to supplement their income. To apply please download an application form from www.leveltrust.org/get-involved/careers or, to request a paper copy of the application form, please email husna.rasul@leveltrust.org or call 07480 753 905. Please send your completed application form to husna.rasul@leveltrust.org The deadline for applications is Sunday 2nd August 2020.

GreenHouse Mentoring – GreenHouse Mentoring Manager – Salary Range £22,000 - £25,000. An opportunity has arisen for an organised and reliable individual, who is passionate about helping young people in Luton, to become the new full-time Manager of GreenHouse Mentoring. GreenHouse Mentoring is a service for our Community and a project of Stopsley Baptist Church. Piloted in 2000, and established in 2002, we supply quality, fully trained, and screened volunteers from diverse backgrounds who choose to consistently meet, mentor and help referred young people in Luton. Our aim is that the mentored young people learn to take responsibility for their actions, improve their social skills, and become more self-confident and resilient. We are looking for the successful candidate to begin during September 2020, working with the existing Managers, attend training sessions from October to

December and take over in January 2021. If you are interested, please apply to: Adrian Nolloth, Executive Director, Stopsley Baptist Church, St Thomas's Road Luton, Bedfordshire. LU2 7XP Email: adrian.nolloth@stopsley.net. Closing date 31st July 2020.

MIND BLMK - Crisis Recovery Peer Support Worker, Luton - We have an exciting opportunity for you to join our Crisis Café team as a Peer Support Worker. Our Mind BLMK Crisis Café is an out-of-hours mental health crisis service which covers Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes providing a safe and welcoming space for people who are feeling distressed and experiencing a crisis. During this role you will use your own lived experience of mental health to support others to de-escalate a crisis, facilitate crisis focussed 1:1s and run peer group sessions that offer structured interventions and support. **Closedown: 10.00am on Wednesday 05.08.20.** [Click here to find out more.](#)

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Alternatively, please reply with 'Unsubscribe' in the subject line.

Community Action Bedfordshire - www.cabeds.org.uk/coronavirus - volunteer@cabeds.org.uk

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