

Community Action: Bedfordshire Central Beds & Luton Volunteering Newsletter

9 December 2020

Included in this newsletter:

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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 either registered your interest in volunteering on the CBC website or you have registered on our online volunteering platform, Volunteer Connect, and opted-in to be part of the Volunteer Bank.

www.cabeds.org.uk | volunteer@cabeds.org.uk | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [@CABedfordshire](#)

Festive Volunteering

Connect and give kindness this Christmas

Community connections have become an important part of our changing lives over the past few months. As we enter the winter months, connecting with others is even more important, especially for those who are socially isolated and lonely. Despite current restrictions, which have meant a lot of the usual Christmas Volunteering projects are not able to go ahead this year, there are still lots of ways to connect with others during the festive period. For example,

- reaching out to a friend who you know is struggling and sending them a text to let them know you are thinking about them
- asking a neighbour if they want anything from the shop when you are going anyway
- calling someone you know may be feeling lonely and listening to them for at least 15 minutes
- writing a letter or thank you card to someone you appreciate
- giving someone a meaningful compliment
- donating an unused item such as warm clothing or technology
- simply smiling can go a long way to spreading a little kindness into someone else's day



Alternatively, you could join in 'The Great Winter Get Together' from 14th December – 18th January and be part of Jo Cox's vision of a less lonely, more connected world, a kinder, more compassionate society where every individual has a sense of belonging and where we recognise that we have more in common than that which divides us. Featuring a different theme each week encompassing five ways people can connect, this vibrant online celebration of community and connection is sure to educate, inform and entertain! [Click here](#) to get involved.

#40,000 Reasons to Care - Encouraging support for Leighton Buzzard residents this winter

On 1st December a local campaign is being launched by Leighton Buzzard and Linslade residents to encourage everyone to support those who are struggling this winter, especially neighbours experiencing loneliness. There are circa 40,000 residents in Leighton Buzzard. 40,000 individuals that make the town what it is. #40,000 reasons to care is a social initiative inspired by a local resident of Leighton Buzzard. It is a response to the growing strain the pandemic is having on the community, heightening the pressure on people experiencing loneliness, mental health challenges and those without support networks. It acknowledges the power of communities to support where traditional infrastructure cannot and wants to raise awareness of these issues over the winter period.

To keep in touch with #40,000 Reasons to Care and to get ideas about what you can do, go to:

Website: www.reasonstocare.org.uk

Twitter: @Reasons2Care

Instagram: reasonstocarelb

Facebook: 40,000 Reasons to Care (Leighton Buzzard)



Donate while you shop

Feeling overwhelmed or daunted by the prospect of Christmas shopping? There is one way to shop online whilst also raising money to support a cause close to your heart. By joining www.easyfundraising.org.uk you can select one of the 150,000 good causes and collect free donations every time you shop online at over 4,421 retailers, including John Lewis, Amazon, eBay and Apple. You could be part of the 2 million supporters who have raised over £34 million so far. It won't cost you a penny extra but your support will go a long way this Christmas.



Current volunteering opportunities

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:

Please scroll down to find out more and click on the [role title](#) for more information!

- [Central Bedfordshire Council \(CBC\)](#)
- [Luton Borough Council](#)
- [Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire](#)
- [Home-Start Central Bedfordshire](#)
- [Luton Irish Forum](#)

- [Samaritans](#)

Bedfordshire volunteering opportunities

Central Bedfordshire Council – Community Champions

We are calling on people throughout Central Bedfordshire to help us to reach their friends, family, neighbours, colleagues and thousands of other local people, with trusted information and advice related to COVID-19. Sign up and join our existing network of 197 community champions.

We know there are a lot of myths that need busting and questions people are asking when it comes to COVID-19 and we need to know what they are. Which is why we are asking as many of you as possible to please sign up, reach out and help keep Central Bedfordshire safe. Anyone interested in joining our network of 197 Community Champions should visit and register [here](#).



Do you have a hobby, passion or skill you could share with others online?

Online Activities Programme in Central Bedfordshire

Central Bedfordshire Council is hosting a programme of online activities for customers who would normally attend its day centres. We are looking for volunteers who could offer 1 hour a week to provide an activity of their choice. Current volunteers are offering activities such as nature talks, memory games, sing-along's, bingo, book readings and calming the mind sessions. If you'd like to get involved in this exciting opportunity, we would love to hear from you! For an informal chat, please email: claire.blankenship@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Luton Council – Covid-19 Community Champions

"Luton's volunteers and community groups have been exceptional throughout the coronavirus crisis in supporting each other and helping people in need.

So many countless acts of love, care and kindness are what makes us all so proud to live and work in this wonderful town.

To build on this we are looking for Covid-19 community champions from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures, faiths, ages and interests to reflect the diversity of Luton, who can help pass on important public health messages and keep people safe from this deadly disease." **Councillor Khtija Malik**

[Click here](#) to find out more and sign up!



Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire



[Digital Communications Volunteer](#)

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire is the local consumer champion promoting choice and influencing the provision of high-quality health, social care and wellbeing services for all across Central Bedfordshire. We are seeking a Digital Communications Volunteer (home based) to support the Digital Communications Officer with an interest / experience in communications, ability to use the internet and social media and undertake research.

Home-Start Central Bedfordshire

Home-Start Special Needs Volunteer

Do you live in Bedfordshire and have SEND parenting/grandparenting experience? Help **local families** get the support they need to give their children the best start in life. Become a Home-Start special needs volunteer. For more information [click here](#)



Luton Irish Forum

[Befriender](#)

This is a lovely opportunity to make a difference to the life of a socially isolated local person. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this has been largely by phone. Visits may be arranged depending on local and national restrictions and the wishes of befriended and volunteer. Tasks are flexible and vary, but the following are typical examples.

- Make regular phone calls or visit someone at home to provide company and a listening ear.
- Accompany them on a walk, even if it's just 'round the block'.
- Get a few essentials or 'top-up' shopping.
- Accompany them to take part in a local activity or social group.
- Collect items from the local pharmacy.
- Accompany them to an appointment, e.g. doctor or hospital.
- Assist with preparing meals and/or hot drinks.
- Help with completing official forms, e.g. applications for a Blue Badge.
- Provide information about other local services that may be helpful.

Samaritans (Cardiff Road, Luton)

Giving some time to be a Samaritan means being there for people who desperately need someone. And that really matters.

Right now, Samaritans need volunteers more than ever.



[Listening Volunteer](#)

As a listening volunteer you will be there to answer calls and messages from people who are in distress and seeking a safe space.

Does this sound like you?

- Are you interested in listening to people who are going through a tough time?
- Are you open-minded and non-judgmental?
- Are you able to listen without telling people what to do?

Listening volunteers can change the course of someone's life but many calls to Samaritans go unanswered because we don't have enough volunteers.

Get support every step of the way

You'll receive full training to prepare you for the kinds of conversations you'll have. And when you start out, you'll have a mentor with you, to give you confidence you're doing the right thing.

[Support Volunteer](#)

Perhaps the idea of listening and talking to people who are having a tough time, is something you do not believe you can do, but recognise the important of this service, and wish to help those who do.

Running a Samaritans branch takes a lot of skills. We need support with tasks such as cleaning, maintenance, event organising, IT, publicity, fundraising, social media and marketing. If you have skills in these kinds of areas,

volunteering is a great way to help Samaritans.

Learn new skills

We need your help if you're happy to be trained in new skills. For example, you'll learn how to use our IT systems or help raise money. These skills often prove useful at work – and on your CV.

Give something back

Whatever you do for Samaritans, you will be helping to change people's lives for the better. That's even true for your own life. Our volunteers say they find volunteering incredibly rewarding.

Keeping in touch

Message from Kay Henderson – Volunteer Centre Manager – Community Action Bedfordshire

After six years working at Community Action Bedfordshire in a number of different roles, I am now moving on to pastures new. I feel incredibly lucky and grateful to have had the pleasure of meeting and working with so many wonderful individuals and organisations.

From the start of the New Year I will be working as a Careers Advisor for Central Bedfordshire Council – Bedfordshire Employment and Skills Service. The service provides Careers Advice, training and support into employment – if you, or anyone you know is looking for some advice or support with all things careers-related, it would be great to hear from you when I am in my new role!

Details for Bedfordshire Employment and Skills Service details:

Email: ncs@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 300 8110

[Website](#)

For all volunteering enquiries please continue to contact the Volunteer Centre Team on volunteer@cabeds.org.uk

I wish you all the best in your search for volunteering!

Kay

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

Karen Hall – Volunteering Adviser

Please note our offices will be closed over the holiday period from 21st December to 4th January 2021.

Staying safe

Keeping Safe whilst Volunteering

Always follow the Government [staying 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.

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 on how to help safely - [click here for more details](#)

The British Red Cross have prepared [short video and quiz](#) to help you volunteer safely.

This newsletter was produced on 09/12/2020 and follows government recommendations correct at this time.

Please keep checking the [GOV website](#) for official advice and the latest information on staying alert and safe.

Additional information

Central Bedfordshire Council - Advice leaflet: Are you struggling to cope?

During the Coronavirus pandemic many people have been much more isolated from others, either because they have needed to shield and protect themselves from getting the virus or simply because their usual social opportunities have stopped. Loneliness in particular can be a real issue when usual social activities have been cancelled. Some people may also be struggling financially and may need extra support at this time. In response to this, we have created a leaflet that can be printed and shared with people that are either elderly, living alone or vulnerable and are perhaps struggling with the impact of the pandemic.



You can download the [leaflet here](#).

If you're an unpaid carer we are pleased to be able to offer you a range of PPE, if you need it.



A carer is someone, including adults and children, who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.

If you are an unpaid carer providing personal care to someone else (particularly if they are not in your household), you might want to consider using PPE to protect yourself and the person you are caring for.

We are pleased to be able to offer a range of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), if you need it. This includes protective gloves, disposable face masks, aprons and a face shield.

Information on when to use PPE and using it correctly can be found in [this](#) Public Health England guide.

We work in partnership with Carers in Bedfordshire, a local organisation with a great range of support available to you as a carer. You can find out more at www.carersinbeds.org.uk or by calling 0300 111 1919.

Carers in Bedfordshire are continuing to provide telephone and virtual support including group activities and individual support, as well as sending out appropriate information. There are also a number of webinars available to attend to find out information about specific conditions.

How to order PPE

If you are an unpaid carer, caring for a family member or someone else and you need PPE for your personal use we will arrange for a pack to be delivered to you, please:

- email carersPPE@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
- make sure the title of the email is "Carers PPE"
- include your name and address (in order that PPE can be posted to you) and the glove size that you require.
- If you do not have access to the internet, please call 0300 300 8900 with all of the above information and we will arrange for PPE to be sent out in the post.

Carers in Bedfordshire

Are you caring for a loved one (family member or friend), unpaid, who couldn't manage without you? If yes, Carers in Bedfordshire are here to support you. The charity offers personalized support, information and guidance, grants, discount card, hospital support (amongst many other things) and has, despite corona, a rich program of events, activities and peer support groups to enhance your health and wellbeing to enable you to keep doing what you do. Have a look [HERE](#) to see the latest What's On program and [HERE](#) to register to gain full support. Have a look at the Carers in Bedfordshire website for full information: <https://carersinbeds.org.uk/>.



Voluntary and Community Sector Job Vacancies

Keech Hospice Care - Assistant Shop Managers (Luton) - The roles are to assist the Shop Manager in achieving sales and profit targets. You will be required to provide an excellent level of customer service and have the ability to assist in the recruiting, managing and developing a team of volunteers. A background in retail is desirable.

- **Birdsfoot Lane, Luton** - Part-time (24 hrs per week) - permanent - £18,304 pro-rata - Closing date 13 December. For more information [click here](#).
- **Park Street, Luton**. Full-time (40 hrs per week) – permanent - £18,304, Closing date 13 December. For more information [click here](#).
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Luton Homeless Partnership - Homeless Health Participation Coordinator - full-time, fixed-term (one year), £26,000 per annum. The Homeless Health Participation Coordinator will work with all the services in Luton to set up and manage a peer advocacy service. You will recruit a team of peer advocates with lived experience of homelessness, with the aim of improving health outcomes locally, as well as offering the peer advocates a number of participation opportunities across the sector. Closing date 14 December. For more information [click here](#)

Hft - Senior Support Worker (Shefford) - full-time, <£23,059 (inclusive of 47 sleep-ins per year). As a senior support worker at Hft you'll be supporting adults with learning disabilities to live the best life possible. You will be a role model to others through demonstrating excellent support to those we support and you will help the registered cluster managers to coach, support and manage staff teams effectively.

Closing date 18 December. For more information [click here](#)

Level Trust (Luton) - Youth and Schools Project Manager - part-time/full-time (32-40 hrs), contract, £25,000 - £28,000 pro rata, Key duties include: Project Management of our holiday club for 8-12 year olds; running young leaders groups across High Schools; overseeing the delivery of free shoes, coats and learning resources to children and young people in need; managing relationships with key staff across our partner schools, organisations and

community; supporting the development of our training centre. Closing date 4 January. For more information [click here](#)

Level Trust, (Luton) - Administration Manager - permanent, part-time (24 hrs), £21,000 - £24,000. Join the office team to support the charity in financial administration, record keeping, mailings, answering general enquiries and other administrative duties. Closing date 4 January. For more information [click here](#)

Mind BLMK – Peer Mentor Facilitator – Full time £20,500 pa - Mind BLMK have an exciting opportunity for a Peer Mentor Facilitator to coordinate a team of peer volunteers to deliver mentoring across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes. Closing date 15 December. For more information [click here](#)

Mind BLMK – Recovery Coordinator – 34 hours per week £21,548.80pa pro rata (actual salary £19,801.60) An exciting opportunity for an individual who shares our ethos and values to join Mind BLMK as a Recovery Coordinator for our Mind Matters Service which runs across Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough. Closing date 22 December. For more information [click here](#)

This email has been sent Community Action Bedfordshire. You are receiving this email because you registered your interest in volunteering via the CBC website or opted-in to be part of the "Volunteer Bank" when you registered on Volunteer Connect – you can opt-out at any time by un-ticking the box on your profile.

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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