



Time may change me, but I can't change time

Where does the time go? I have spent 12 years of my life at Carers Leeds in the role of Office Administrator. I joined Carers Leeds, when I was a carer for my partner, and I had also worked five years at a Volunteer Centre in Bradford. I am still here because I work with a fantastic team of staff and volunteers.

Many things have changed at work this year, including my job. In April, I was happy to start my new role as Volunteer Coordinator. I have always worked with volunteers at Carers Leeds while also juggling admin, facilities and IT tasks. Thankfully, I can now focus on all things volunteering (which I love). However, I agree with Aidan, Carers Befriending Coordinator, page 3, when he says, "It's a unique time to start a new job."

My job involves wearing many hats: recruiter, interviewer, trainer, event organiser, supervisor, evaluator and communicator. I like a challenge!

Since March, I have been working from my home office (spare bedroom!). During this time, both staff and volunteers have met with me online to talk about volunteering from home. Some of our volunteers are making phone calls to carers, attending online support groups and running carer activity groups on Zoom from home. We will hear more from these adaptable volunteers in the next edition of the newsletter.

Over the last six months, it's been a privilege to keep in touch with volunteers by email, Zoom, phone and newsletter. Thanks to everyone for taking time to speak on the phone, meet up on Zoom, send an email and read our newsletters. I have enjoyed our conversations and appreciated your feedback. My colleagues Brenda, Nashima and Sue, who have also been in contact with volunteers feel the same.

Back in January, we achieved the Investing in Volunteers quality standard, and we continue to challenge ourselves as an organisation to do the very best for volunteers. We believe that teamwork is the best way to do this. So that's why we have set up two staff working groups to promote and develop 1. Volunteering & 2. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. I am excited to be a member of both of these groups so I will be talking more about them in future editions of the newsletter. For now, there's an article on National Inclusion Week on page 8.

Our largest volunteer team of Envelope Fillers have been on pause since March. We miss the laughter and the activity that usually comes from our 2nd floor meeting room at The Headrow when they are in the office. To help fill this gap, we asked Lena and Paul, who are part of the Envelopes team, to tell us their stories on pages 6 and 7. Enjoy!

Warm wishes. Valerie, Volunteer Coordinator





Carers Befriending

What a unique time to start a new role!

Hí I'm Aidan, the new befriending Coordinator.

I have worked in the Carers Connections Team as a connections worker since December 2018, and have enjoyed working closely alongside the befriending coordinator to support isolated carers to build their confidence and connect to others in their community. I have met carers and gone with them to local groups to help them feel connected and involved in their community. I also set up community lunch groups for local carers to Connect and build friendships with each other and have now taken these online via Zoom as a way for carers to stay in touch from the safety and comfort of their own home.

When I saw that I had been successful in gaining the role of Befriending Coordinator I was excited to be able to work alongside the volunteer team and start to plan how we continue to offer isolated carers the support they need in new creative ways. This creative approach is something we are still discussing as volunteer managers, so that we can keep supporting carers in a safe manner despite the restriction in place due to Covid-19. We have already converted face to face appointments to telephone appointments, the response from carers has been overwhelmingly positive, one carer described the phone support since the COVID-19 as making *"all the difference in the world. We will continue to offer alternatives to face to face support for the foreseeable future. This means that we need to respond to the needs of carers and their preference for this type of support.*



One such example was a volunteer explaining that the carer misses face to face support and suggested utilising the tablet lending scheme to loan the carer a tablet so that she could offer zoom support. This volunteer will be teaching the carer how to use zoom over the coming weeks and then will be able to offer this as a way to have a virtual face to face appointment. This will be more interactive and allow the carer to share her progress with her art and craft projects.

I'm excited to continue to develop the way we befriend carers to build their confidence and prepare them for a future when we will be able to meet again face to face.



Thinking About Doing Things Differently



Hi, I'm Nikki.

You may know me as the carers befriending coordinator, however I'm now in the new role of Carer Engagement Team Leader.

It's my job to think about things differently in order to increase the level of involvement of carers in the development and delivery of the Carers Leeds service and other services in the City.

Ok but what does that actually mean?

I'll be thinking about doing this differently:

- creating a plan to ensure that we involve carers in helping us decide how the Carers Leeds service operates,
- supporting carers to become involved in joint NHS/social care projects and strategic developments in health care (with training and support); and
- ensuring that carers from under represented communities are encouraged to participate in the project and that their views are heard.

Why is carer engagement important to me?

Having had experience of being a carer myself and having been involved in various focus groups and consultation days where I never found out what changes had been made as a result (if any), I know the importance of not only having the opportunity to be involved but also being kept informed of what is happening afterwards.

What help do I need from carers right now?

At the moment I'm looking for:-

4 or 5 carers to pilot a new scheme using their smartphone or tablet. This is for a new innovation which will help Carers support services nationally (including Carers Leeds) to identify what services / supports are needed in real time. The commitment is about 5 minutes per day. I don't have any more information on this at the moment, other than I think it's a really exciting project for us to be able to be involved in. You don't need to be a computer whizz, in fact, for this it is better if you aren't!

If you would like to know more about this or possible future opportunities to be involved, please contact me by phone 07508 885 898 or email nikki.pattinson@carersleeds.org.uk

Board of Trustees



Think Boards are boring? Not ours! Dealing with serious topics doesn't have to be dull. Our board of trustees is made up of real people, just like you and me.

What does the board do? It is the responsibility of our Trustees to ensure our charity is run effectively and meets our purpose of providing quality information, advice and support to unpaid carers aged 16+ in Leeds.

The meetings are formally structured and we follow an agenda which has items such as reviewing risks to make sure that we're looking at all possible topics that might present a future problem and agree how to resolve it, checking accounts to make sure we're spending as agreed, and agreeing policies that safeguard staff, volunteers and carers.

Although the meetings are formally structured, there's always time to have a laugh. Our trustees take their work seriously, but not themselves. Humour is vital to any team working well together, and our trustees make a very good team.

So who are the trustees of Carers Leeds? Andy Bottomley is one of our longest serving trustees and is currently our Vice Chair. Andy is a carer for his partner and a keen biker. If you've spotted a guy walking through Carers Leeds HQ in leathers clutching a helmet and an iPad, that'll be him.

Sam Campbell is an accountant and our current Treasurer. She works with Beth to keep our finances on track. Until very recently Sam was Head of Finance at Leeds company Hainsworth who have been making fabrics since 1783 and make the ceremonial red uniforms worn by the Royal Family during state occasions.

Daxa Patel is a former carer and a solicitor ... but that's not all. In the short time Daxa has been with Carers Leeds she has also run the London marathon for charity, qualified as a business coach, volunteered for Silverline and become a published author.

Andy Rawnsley is the Chair of the Board. He is the Chief Executive of Aspire Community Benefit Society which provides vital services to adults with learning disabilities and has worked with Val for more years than they'd like to admit.

Alicia Ridout is our newest trustee. She is a former carer and an Occupational Therapist with more than 30 years' experience in clinical practice, service improvement, leadership, and management across the health sector.

We've got quite a small board at the moment but over the years we've had trustees from all walks of life, carers, Cambridge university graduates, teachers, solicitors, social workers, police officers...but whatever their background, our trustees have played a key role in developing the charity and helping us reach where we are today – the biggest, best (and only) dedicated carer support service in Leeds. Oh and award winning...can't forget that claim to fame.



Hi Everyone, Meet Lena. Lena was a founding member of Carers Leeds. When the organisation was set up there were only five people to begin with. Lena originally started volunteering by visiting an elderly lady. Lena later moved on to envelope filling and 23 years later she is still filling envelopes!

In 2016, Lena was pleased to meet Princess Anne through Carers Leeds and remembers the conversation they exchanged. Princess Anne picked up the fact that she is a Townswoman.

Volunteer Story by Catherine, Carers Leeds Volunteer Reporter

Lena has led such an interesting life and has so many stories to tell ... here are just a few of them.

Although Lena is now recognised as a Townswoman, during the war, Lena worked for the Women's Land Army. Women, known as Land Girls, replaced male farm workers. Supplies were scarce on the farm and there was no electricity. Lena regularly had to light a fire to keep warm and she was lucky to have a spade!

During her childhood, she regularly went with other children to the bandstand in the park. One day, she saw a large military balloon in the sky which frightened them so they hid under the bandstand. On one occasion, a dog stole one of the children's dummy. The owner apologised and gave them 6 pence. Lena thought she was rich and bought everyone ice cream!

When Lena was young, she collected apples for her mum to make pies. Her friend climbed the tree and would throw the apples down for Lena to catch. When they were spotted their response would be "We are looking for a ball". They are still friends.

After the war, Lena got married and when she was having her second child, the local children's home closed. Lena took in several children to stay at their home. Still to this day one man writes to Lena and calls her Mum. He is thankful for her making him the man he is today and for giving him his sense of humour.

Lena recalled a memorable trip to London when she visited the Houses of Parliament. "I was overwhelmed by the beautiful building and the history. I have written a story about my visit".

Have you ever been stuck in a lift? Lena once got stuck and had to press the emergency button for assistance. The woman on the receiving end said: "It will be five weeks before someone could come out". The only way around this was for her to call the fire brigade. Lena dialed 999 and specifically asked for men under 40, good looking, a good sense of humour and to be QUICK! This was heard over the tannoy and she was told they don't take special requests.

In her late 80's, Lena travelled the world. Her friend had never been on a plane and wanted a long haul flight. They travelled for 11 months and more or less visited every country. The airport staff were so impressed that two elderly ladies wanted to travel the world that they upgraded all flights, which was a lovely surprise.

Lena is now looking forward to travelling back to Carers Leeds



Volunteer Story by Catherine, Carers Leeds Volunteer Reporter

Hi everyone, meet Paul. Time has passed so quickly as a volunteer at Carers Leeds. Paul hadn't realised how long he had been here until he received a certificate last year for 10 years of volunteering.

His practice nurse suggested that it would benefit him to become involved with Carers Leeds, and he is glad that he did. It has helped him in his caring role and also personally as a volunteer.

After he contacted Carers Leeds, he was made aware of the need for volunteers. They were looking for volunteers to help distribute the carers newsletter. The role of Envelope Filler involves working with a team of volunteers to insert 1000s of newsletters into envelopes. "I felt that stuffing was for Turkeys so I was pleased when they renamed the role to Envelope Filler". The main reason he got involved was that he wanted to give something back. He also enjoys the good company and the custard cream biscuits. "I feel well looked after and appreciated and love the warmth and friendliness of everyone. I love to listen to volunteers talk about their caring experiences and to share my own experiences." He also finds it lovely at the end of the day when he can meet staff from different departments. It allows him to find out more about what their roles entail.

When he was young, his parents opened an off licence in Bradford. They wanted to pass this on to him. However, he decided this was not for him as he couldn't drive and had no inclination for the shop life. His uncle worked at a well-known home shopping company. He tried to see if there were any jobs available. However, he managed to land his first job using his initiative. "I worked for over 30 years at the company and had many job roles. I always believed that if a job is worth doing it is worth doing well and right first time. I also spent a year stacking shelves at a well-known supermarket and volunteered in an animal charity shop, one day a week."

After he retired early, it gave him more time to care for his mum. It also helped him support his wife, who has polio. In 2014, they moved into a bungalow which they love. Sadly, at the time, his mum passed away.

Their bungalow backs onto a warehouse. Paul loves the sights and sounds of the lorries coming up and down into the loading docks. It reminds him of his working life and brings back good memories.

"I am so pleased that I got involved with Carers Leeds. I look forward to returning to my volunteering role, to being with others and to sharing a packet or two of CUSTARD CREAMS."



National Inclusion Week 28th September 2020

“Diversity is being invited to the party and Inclusion is being asked to dance”

Vera Myers

The theme of National Inclusion Week 2020 is **Each One, Reach One**. It's about individuals and organisations connecting and inspiring each other to make inclusion an everyday reality.

What is inclusion?

For us, inclusion is having an overarching culture that encompasses equality and diversity that is embedded in all aspects of our jobs and service delivery.

Promoting a culture in which staff, volunteers and carers from all backgrounds have a strong sense of belonging and can work creatively and innovatively to achieve our own and Carers Leeds ambitions.

What are we doing?

During the week the staff team will be having a conversation about what it means to be inclusive. We will share and recommend webinars, Ted Talks and other online resources to develop our understanding and knowledge. At the end of the week, we will make sure inclusion continues to be a regular discussion point.

Going forward, we will also invite volunteers to take part in our ongoing conversations about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

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