

## Could you be a Sure Start to Later Life Volunteer?

***'Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless but because they're priceless!'*** (Sherry Anderson, Director of DCSNS, Arkansas)

Would you like to offer some of your free time or know someone who might?

Sure Start to Later Life are currently looking for new volunteers to support older vulnerable people through befriending, chatting, supporting to go out or giving IT support.

Volunteers are very much considered part of the Sure Start team and currently there are around a dozen people giving their time to support others. Ideally though, this number could be doubled to help them meet the needs in Halton.

Volunteers past and present come from all walks of life with ages ranging from school leavers through to older people. Some volunteers have become involved after initially needing support themselves before discovering that supporting others helps overcome their own feelings of isolation.

Others have found that the time spent volunteering has given them invaluable experience and the desire to retrain for a career in social services. The service has previously had volunteers who have now moved on into employment, both within the council and externally.

Anyone who has volunteered in the past will no doubt be aware of how rewarding an experience it can be and often with the Sure Start volunteers, friendships are made which continue beyond the initial support.

One volunteer, who supports 3 ladies aged between their 60's to 90's, says

*"... although I just go "for a chat" I feel I can give them some time listening to them and to talk about general things which makes them feel less shut off and maybe more normal. I was unable to do this with my parents so now I feel maybe I can give something back and help families support their relatives and keep them at home."*

No matter how little time you have there is always someone who would benefit from a chat over a cuppa!

## How can volunteering help older people in Halton?

- Volunteers help people retain or regain their independence and help them feel less isolated and alone.
- Volunteers do not provide personal care or replace nurses, social workers or home helps.
- Just **2 hours** a week can make a huge difference to someone's life whether it means just keeping them company in their own home, taking them shopping or helping them learn new skills.

**What can we offer a volunteer?**

- A full induction programme, on-going support and training provided by the team and HBC to assist with your support role.
- To keep you involved in the team, its service provision and any change to that provision
- An opportunity to develop skills in new areas

**Sounds interesting, where can I find out more?**

For more information about volunteering please give the team a call on 01928 569498 or just drop into their office at Grangeway Community Centre in Runcorn or check out their Volunteering page on the intranet.

If you are aware of someone who would benefit from this service, then please make a referral to the team in the usual manner.