



# VASL

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SPRING REVIEW 2021

## Welcome to VASL's Spring Review.

It has been a very long and hard winter for all of us; however, at VASL we can now see signs of spring that bring hope for a better year ahead.

We are delighted that our fabulous Transport Scheme is now up and running again and would like to say a big thank you to all our volunteer drivers who have returned, key in hand, to provide transport to vital hospital appointments.

Across all our projects there are changes afoot, with more activities returning to normal! (Although the 'new normal' may be with us for a while.)

Please enjoy reading about our work here at VASL, and again I cannot thank Staff, Volunteers and Trustees enough for all their support through one of the most challenging years for the charity.

I am convinced we will emerge stronger and hold onto the 'Community Spirit' that has been evident throughout this whole pandemic.

Wishing you all a safe and warm summer.

Maureen x



# SUPPORT FOR CARERS LEICESTERSHIRE



Supporting 3942 Carers across  
Leicestershire and Rutland

1157 new referrals in the last 12 Months

Carers Passport developed and rolled out  
– 3739 sent out on launch

Online groups and 1-2-1 meetings  
successfully continuing to provide  
essential support to Carers.

## Effects of Covid on Unpaid Carers National Statistics.

4 in 5 unpaid carers (81%) are currently providing more care than before lockdown.

More than three quarters (78%) of carers reported that the needs of the person they care for have increased.

Most carers (64%) have not been able to take any breaks at all in the last six months.

More than half (58%) of carers have seen their physical health impacted by caring through the pandemic, while 64% said their mental health has worsened.

More than 38% of carers have seen responsibilities increased due to external help being on hold.

## SFC Volunteer Telephone Befriending

Liz McMillan has joined the SFC team to focus on recruiting and matching Volunteers to clients who will benefit from telephone befriending. VASL has always been passionate about the benefits its projects provide throughout the community. Exciting times ahead!



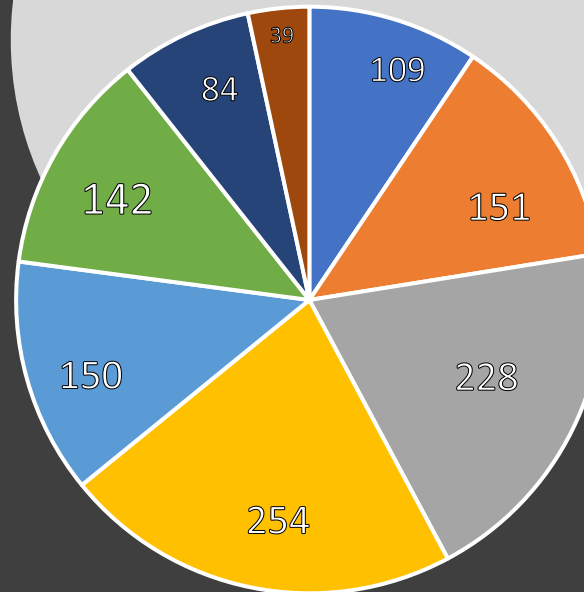
OUR ZOOM GROUPS TAKE PLACE ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS AND TIMES EACH MONTH

**SUPPORT  
FOR CARERS  
LEICESTERSHIRE**

- **Blaby - 1st Tuesday - 2:30-3:30pm**
- **Coalville - 1st Thursday - 10-11am**
- **Evening - 2nd Tuesday - 7-8pm**
- **Melton - 2nd Wednesday - 11-12pm**
- **Hinckley - 3rd Tuesday - 11-12pm**
- **Oadby and Wigston - 3rd Thursday - 2:30-3:30pm**
- **Harborough - 4th Monday - 7-8pm**



## NUMBER OF NEW REFERRALS SINCE 1ST APRIL 2020



■ OADBY & WIGSTON

■ HARBOROUGH

■ CHARNWOOD

■ HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH

■ NORTH WEST LEIC'S

■ BLABY

■ MELTON

■ OTHER

Face to face appointments (1 hr)  
with our Carers Wellbeing Advisers  
are now available over Zoom.  
Tel. 01858 468543 to book your slot.



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**NEW CARERS PASSPORT**  
Caring for a loved one?  
Make sure you have one of these...



**SUPPORT  
FOR CARERS  
LEICESTERSHIRE**

**VASL**  
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- **Community Champions** has adapted the project to meet the needs of clients for social connection who are both online and offline.
- Friendly volunteers ring, write or email our offline clients regularly to stay in touch. CC staff have delivered Activity Bags, cream teas, and offered Healthy at Home bags to housebound clients. The latter are assembled by Leicestershire and Rutland Sport and have lots of ideas for simple activities people can do to stay mobile and healthy. We are also going to be distributing **Community Voices**, a booklet with stories about the fascinating life experiences of clients, volunteers and staff – we hope this will lead to more conversation and connection.
- For people who are online we have monthly Zoom Community Gatherings and Mini-Gatherings where we have a chance to chat in groups, do quizzes or hear from interesting speakers, eg a local author and a new Community Recovery Worker.
- Zoom has also been used to offer exciting learning opportunities – our session on Coping with Loss explored how storytelling and mandalas can help us process loss (of a loved one, a job, our health, a holiday, a pet etc). We also had an artist from London teach us how to draw a hedgehog which was fun!



COMMUNITY  
CHAMPIONS



As Covid restrictions ease we are facilitating garden visits and hosting groups of 6 outside - people have really enjoyed the safely distanced face-to-face contact.

April 2020 –  
March 21

127 new  
relationships

89 telephone

11 email or pen  
pals

18 email or pen  
pal with secondary  
schools

9 digital , mainly  
help with Zoom

*“I feel so lucky to have Community Champions in my life. A life saver without doubt during this very long period of uncertainty and worry. Thank you all.”*



Transport staff have been phoning Car Scheme clients who are lonely/isolated, chatting and giving them information to help with anything they need.

Thanks to Lottery funding some of the Car Scheme clients received an Activity Bag to help them through the dark nights. The bags contained magazines, edible treats, hot drinks, a puzzle book, tactile toys, craft items, a hyacinth bulb and vase.



- The Car Scheme restarted on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 when it was felt it was safe for our volunteers and clients. 16 drivers were raring to go on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 7 more have restarted since, and we have also recruited a new driver. We have had 52 requests for transport - our volunteer drivers are loving helping people to get out and about again.

- Some of our volunteer drivers are delivering bags of food daily for Jubilee Foodbank. In the first 4 months of the year deliveries were made to 390 households.

# VASL YOUNG CARERS PROJECT



- During 2021 Young Carers have continued online activities including Art sessions, Bake Alongs and Games, and have also focused on Young Carers Action Day and Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Kate and Alison also created and delivered individual goodie bags to all her Young Carers and has ensured that regular contact has continued with all and their families.

Back at The Cube! Kate and Alison along with 13 Young Carers and 6 Volunteers were able to celebrate meeting face-to-face. Further events are planned, including Art Therapy and a trip to an outdoor activity Centre!



**Monday** – Mindfulness and Meditation

**Tuesday** – Workout

**Wednesday** - Coffee Morning

**Thursday** – Ngage Group (social group)

**Friday** – Furry Friends



MMM have continued to support clients by offering online groups and one-to-one phone calls.



Manager Pritisha and her colleague Samantha have created daily online activities and continue to develop these to meet the needs of their clients.



Currently recruiting for new Volunteers, one starting soon!

**20 New Referrals during 2021 and currently supporting**



THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE DONATED TO VASL RECENTLY - WE HAVE RECEIVED OVER £2000!

**MRS BEE'S KITCHEN**  
— catering & events —

