

# What do Community Champions volunteers do?

Volunteers help older people to make social connections, locally and online. Volunteers provide tailored support to each individual client through companionship and encouragement.

## Volunteers help clients

Regain their social confidence

Make new contacts

Join groups and events - locally and online  
Discover new opportunities

Learn digital skills

Make lifestyle changes

## How to get started

1. Complete and return the VASL Volunteer Registration form which includes the names of two referees.
2. Have an informal interview to introduce you to the project and for us to get to know you.
3. To proceed you need to provide two references and two pieces of personal identification, e.g. passport/utility bill.
4. Training - work through our training booklet, watch short videos and answer some questions via email. We will also invite you to join us for face-to-face training so you can meet other volunteers.
5. Informal conversation with the Community Champions Manager to answer any questions you may have and to clarify our expectations of volunteers.
6. Introduction to client either in person or over the phone.

# VASL

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VASL Community Champions is funded by  
The National Lottery Community Fund.



If you'd like to find out more:

Visit - [www.vasl.org.uk](http://www.vasl.org.uk)



Call - 01858 439262

Email - [champions@vasl.org.uk](mailto:champions@vasl.org.uk)

Follow on Facebook - [vaslonline](https://www.facebook.com/vaslonline)

## VASL

1st Floor, Torch House Torch Way  
Northampton Road, Market Harborough LE16 9HL

### Please Note

The information contained within this leaflet  
can be provided in alternative formats/languages -  
simply contact us to request your alternative.



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# COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS2 VOLUNTEERING

## TACKLING LONELINESS

[www.vasl.org.uk/communitychampions](http://www.vasl.org.uk/communitychampions)

# VASL Community Champions

VASL is a local community charity based in Market Harborough with a long history of supporting older people to enjoy their lives.

Community Champions is a hybrid project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund to tackle loneliness amongst older people.

It works across Harborough District in South Leicestershire empowering people to make local and digital connections, through regular volunteer social contact.

We also organise regular social and learning events, both face to face and online.



**We want to empower older people, and boost their confidence, so they can lead fulfilling lives.**

Our target client group is over 60, living alone in Harborough District and without a diagnosis of dementia or serious mental health condition, who are lonely and would welcome help to get out and make connections.

"I feel it is very well run and extremely professional. I appreciate that there is help and advice every step of the way."

## Volunteer Roles

We have a variety of roles to interest you:

**Community Champions Volunteers** visit people at home weekly for a chat or go out to a local cafe together. They encourage clients to make changes in their life to connect with local people and or make online connections. They can accompany clients on the Next Steps course and help knit them into the community.

**Telephone Volunteers** ring clients on a regular basis, providing company, support and information.

**Pen Pals or Email Pals** correspond with clients exchanging news and sharing interests via letters or emails.

Volunteers for the above three roles are matched with clients for 9 months giving plenty of time for volunteers to get to know their client. After this we have a chat with both the volunteer and client to see if you have become friends, or want to stay as volunteer-client.

"I now have a better understanding of how big an issue loneliness is in this area. I feel that my empathy levels have increased."

**Digital Volunteers** can visit clients at home or run monthly sessions in the library. They show clients how to use smartphones and tablets.

**Steering Group Volunteers** attend three Steering Group meetings a year and provide us with honest feedback about how the project is meeting its aims to reduce loneliness. They give ideas for continual improvement.

**Hosting Volunteers** help at monthly Community Gatherings and ensure that clients are seated comfortably, and have plenty of refreshments and people to chat to.

**Free quality training and support are provided for all roles.**

**Time commitment** we need you to have at least an hour a week to volunteer, but can also offer the chance to do far more volunteering all during office hours.

## Benefits of Volunteering

Enrich clients' lives and learn from their life experiences

Join our thriving volunteering community and meet other diverse volunteers

Improve your communication and relationship-building skills

Boost your confidence and enhance your CV

Meet a variety of local people from different organisations enabling you to expand your social network

Increase your knowledge of local and national organisations supporting older people

Boost your mental health and well-being

Cherish the satisfaction of putting something back into your local community

"I particularly enjoyed the creative writing and drawing workshops, extending and developing new skills."

## Special Projects

Community Champions Volunteers can also choose to get involved in a variety of special projects, for example:

Gathering people's life experiences for our Community Voices booklet

Working with partner organisations such as Culture Leicestershire to preserve memories

Art exchange projects with local schools

Inter-generational dialogue