



# Alsager Community Support



## Information for New Volunteers

### Background

Alsager Community Support was founded in January 2015 as a project of Alsager Community Church. In August 2022 ACS became an independent charity managed by a team of six trustees. The Community Support Centre was built on church land with the aid of a grant from the National Lottery and was furnished with donations from the former Co-op bank and store. The Centre is managed by Liz Pinkney, who is a volunteer, with help from our part-time paid Admin Assistant Sarah Smith. The centre is open each weekday morning, staffed by 2 or 3 volunteers. Some of our work is undertaken by phone or email, particularly our Driving and Befriending Schemes. We work closely with volunteers from Alsager Foodbank, which is a project of Alsager Community Church, and operates from the rear of our building.

The aim of Alsager Community Support is to provide a wide range of free services to help people locally in Alsager, without their needing to travel to other towns. Trained and experienced volunteers at our centre offer a friendly listening ear to anyone, whatever their situation, in strict confidence. We are flexible in our approach and are always seeking to meet the needs of our community. Please refer to our latest leaflet to read about all the services we offer.

### Volunteer roles

**Information Volunteers** work in the centre each weekday morning, on a rota basis, usually once a week from 9.15 to 12.30. They are trained to deal with a wide range of enquiries and signpost people to other agencies where necessary. Some volunteers have experience in specialist areas, and can deal with benefits, housing advice, completing forms etc. Good IT and research skills are useful.

**Reception Volunteers** greet visitors and help with basic enquiries only, providing support for Information Volunteers. They deal with lost property, school uniform and leaflet requests, make refreshments, and chat to visitors who are waiting to be seen. Times 9.30 – 12.30 one shift per week or fortnight.

**Helping Hands Volunteers** are on call to make an occasional visit to a vulnerable person in their home to help with minor tasks which would not normally require a tradesman. Times can vary to suit yourself and the client.

**Befriending Volunteers** help isolated, lonely or vulnerable people, by phoning and/or visiting them on a regular basis. Some also help with shopping, collecting prescriptions etc. Times can vary to suit yourself and the client.

**Drivers** use their own cars to take older or vulnerable people to medical appointments (times of which can vary – you can choose when to respond to a request) and to Alsager lunch club on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 11.15 and 13.15 – drivers usually do 2 hours once every 2 weeks. Expenses paid.

**Uniform Volunteers** help to sort and display donated school uniform at our Centre, and deal with uniform requests. Minimum 2 hours per week. Extra volunteers are particularly needed during the summer months.

**Project Co-ordinator Volunteers** help us to organise specific projects. High level organisational skills and good IT skills are required, plus use of social media. Time flexible, min 2 hours per week.

### Induction and Training

All volunteers undertake one or more induction sessions led by an experienced volunteer. These are supported by brief guides to which volunteers can refer following the induction.

Volunteers are informed of relevant training opportunities as these arise. These are often delivered by external providers and may be in person or online. Mandatory training, for example changes in safeguarding practice, will be delivered to the appropriate volunteer groups in-house.

### Probationary Period

It is not always possible for ourselves or a volunteer to know in advance whether the volunteering activity they have chosen is right for them. All volunteers undertake a probationary period – usually 6 sessions. At the end of this period we will hold a review discussion to decide whether the volunteer should continue, cease volunteering or change to another activity. Further training may be offered or requested if needed.

### Policies

All volunteers are required to abide by the policies of ACS, which are available in a folder at the centre. We would particularly draw your attention to those regarding Confidentiality, Lone Working and Safeguarding. Copies are available on request. We expect all our volunteers to treat clients, staff and other volunteers with courtesy, respect and a positive attitude.

### Support for Volunteers

If at any time you need to talk to someone about anything you have seen or heard from a client which troubles you, please contact either Sarah, Liz, David or Nessie.

Staff meetings and training sessions are held on a regular basis, where any matter can be freely discussed. We aim to serve with excellence, so ideas for improvement are always welcome. There is a box in reception for any comments from both volunteers and clients.

### Contact Information

Community Support Centre & Helpline: 01270 876605

Postal address: 5A Lawton Road, Alsager ST7 2AA

Website: [www.alsagercommunitysupport.org.uk](http://www.alsagercommunitysupport.org.uk)

Manager: Liz Pinkney 07741 408520 [liz@alsagercommunitysupport.org.uk](mailto:liz@alsagercommunitysupport.org.uk)

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