

# JOIN OUR DRIVE to Change Lives

**B**efore coronavirus struck, demand for community transport was rising dramatically in Warwickshire, driven by the needs of some of our most vulnerable residents. Those who needed help to get to hospitals and health services ... to stroke clubs, dance classes and many more social activities. To do things many of us then took for granted!

And until March, when pandemic hit, this was what VASA helped to provide every day. Our services help change people's lives, as you can see from Helen and Malcolm's story shared here. We're really looking forward to helping Helen and many passengers like her when it's safe for our full services to resume again.

In the meantime, we've managed to restart our transport service for medical appointments thanks to our fantastic team of volunteers. Community spirit is at an all time high - and we need you to help us keep up the great work too! We're keen to recruit more drivers as soon as possible as demand is starting to rise again and more people need to get to medical appointments. Here's how you can help our vulnerable passengers as a volunteer ...

For some people, you may be the only person they can chat to that day. Knowing they can rely on someone who'll turn up on time, drive them to the right place and be ready to collect them after their appointment, makes them feel more confident and less stressed. And community transport is usually much cheaper than using taxis.

As a volunteer driver, you'll enjoy flexible hours to suit your lifestyle. The work may be challenging and also great fun! You can make a difference to other people's lives in a very short time - and it can change your life too, giving you new interests and confidence.

We've taken every precaution to make our service as safe and supportive as possible for drivers and passengers alike. This includes providing volunteers with a written agreement, detailed guidance and procedures to follow, PPE (including face masks for drivers and passengers) and practical advice.



Malcolm, volunteer driver, with Helen

## Helen and Malcolm's story

Helen and Malcolm first met two years ago and haven't stopped chatting since! Helen wanted more independence as she reached her 20s, preferring not to rely on family members for lifts. Malcolm was recently widowed and was at a loss to know what to do - until his family suggested volunteer driving. "I hadn't expected to find someone I got on as well with as Malcolm," explains Helen. "We laugh and chat all the time and he's so reliable." And it feels like he's part of her family, too!

Malcolm and Helen have driven thousands of miles to keep up with all her interests. Studying Counselling at Coventry University, Helen has volunteered with Guy's Gift, and is passionate about Wheelchair Dance, competing at national level (and having appeared on Midlands Today). Until recently, she attended weekly classes in Birmingham and trained and competed regularly - and Malcolm would always be there, having added a newfound passion for Wheelchair Dance to his other favourite social activity, playing snooker! "It was lovely to see all the dancers together - it was a great addition to my social life," he says.



If you're interested in volunteering as a community transport driver, please get in touch immediately: call VASA on 01789 262889 or email [emma@vasa.org.uk](mailto:emma@vasa.org.uk). We'd like to hear from you even if you can't start straight away.

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