



Welcome to Warwickshire Vision Support



Welcome

Thank you for volunteering for Warwickshire Vision Support. A local charity for local people - working to improve the lives of visually impaired people in Warwickshire.

We are privileged to receive the support of over 250 volunteers who collectively donate almost 20,000 hours each year.

By donating your time and energy you will make a lasting impact on the lives of the people you support.

Your contribution can significantly reduce social isolation, help people to build new support networks and give people the skills and confidence to embrace new challenges.

You too can make a real difference.



Phil Arkell, Chief Executive

Although I was not born in Warwickshire, my connection to Stratford upon Avon and my love for the Royal Shakespeare Company has meant that Warwickshire has played an enormous part in both my personal and professional life.

I first became associated with Warwickshire Vision Support when I was approached to write a foreword to the Catalogue for the Warwickshire Talking Book Service more than 20 years ago. Like many other people, I knew family members and friends living with sight loss who missed the written word and who felt cut off from so much of our rich culture.

Sight loss changes the way we live. We see proud independent people gradually losing their confidence and withdrawing from life - shopping, visiting family and meeting friends becomes more challenging as our sight deteriorates. This is when we most need help and support and Warwickshire Vision Support is there to help us.

Today, the number of people living with sight loss is increasing at an alarming rate. There are now more than 17,500 people living with permanent and uncorrectable sight loss in Warwickshire. These people need our support to enable them to continue to live full and independent lives.

Warwickshire Vision Support has been providing that support for more than a hundred years. From initial assessments and rehabilitation services, through to advice and information; access to essential resources; and, of course that essential social support that so many people living with sight loss need so much – Warwickshire Vision Support continues to offer an excellent quality service to its members.

On a personal level, many of you will have heard of my own struggle with sight loss. My recent diagnosis of age-related macular degeneration has brought its own challenges. But I am a firm believer that with the right support we can continue to work, continue to explore our world and continue to live life to the full.

Thank you for joining us at Warwickshire Vision Support - together we can make a real difference.



Dame Judi Dench, Patron

Our Patron

About us

Warwickshire Vision Support is the leading charity supporting people living with sight loss in Warwickshire. Our aim is help people to adjust to living with sight loss by providing the skills, confidence and support to remain independent and in control.

We do this by delivering Rehabilitation Services, on behalf of Warwickshire County Council, and through a wide range of charitable support activities.

Our Values

We believe that living with sight loss should not be a barrier to enjoying a full and satisfying life.

Our aim is to:

- Help people come to terms with vision loss
- Facilitate access to advice, information and support services which enable people to have more choice, greater independence and healthier lifestyles.

Our Volunteers

As a local charity for local people, we pride ourselves on our ability to offer local services to our members. As a Warwickshire Vision volunteer, your dedication, skills and experience will make a difference to people living in your community.

We are extremely proud of our team of Volunteers. By donating about 20,000 hours every year, they ensure that anyone living with sight loss does not have to live in isolation or fear and can continue to be an active member of their community.

Our Approach

We have lots of Volunteer roles. You can choose the activity you wish to support, when to volunteer and how many hours you wish to contribute. Whether it is a couple of hours a month or a couple of hours each day we value your contribution.

In return, we will offer you training and support and cover your travel expenses to ensure that you will not be out of pocket.

10 ways you can help Warwickshire Vision Support

1. Fundraising

Warwickshire Vision Support is first and foremost a local charity for local people. We are only able to offer our services thanks to the generosity of others. We ask all our Volunteers to consider what they can do to help us to increase our profile and raise funds.

Here are some areas where you might be able to help:

- Organise your own fundraising event or run a stall at a local fair or market
- Do you have a favourite pub, restaurant or local shop? Could you ask them to take a collection tin - this helps increase our profile and raise funds?
- Holding a street or store collection
- If you have a particular passion or skill why not see if it can generate money for Warwickshire Vision Support? You can sell your products, or get people to sponsor you.
- Do you enjoy baking? Perhaps you

could invite your friends for a coffee morning in aid of Warwickshire Vision Support? This would help to spread the word about what we do and help recruit new volunteers

- Do you know anyone who enjoys running? Why not persuade them to run for Warwickshire Vision Support at the next fun run or marathon?
- Why not persuade your local school, company or Rotary/Lions Club to choose Warwickshire Vision Support as their Charity of the Year?

If fundraising is not for you, don't worry because we have many varied and exciting roles for you to consider.

2. Home Visitors

Home Visitors support people living on their own, help to read correspondence, share a book or newspaper, check use-by dates on food in the fridge, or simply have a chat and a cup of tea. If you enjoy meeting people and are willing to donate

a few hours each month, then you could make a real difference and brighten up someone's day.

3. Club Organisers

We run 14 clubs across Warwickshire. There are many ways to participate, from organising entertainments and welcoming the members to helping serve refreshments and keeping the accounts. Of course the most important part is to sit down and have a chat with the members.

4. Drivers

Many of our members struggle to get around. Some live in remote villages with poor public transport or are unable to leave the house without support. Our Volunteers drive our members to and from clubs and meetings ensuring that everyone who wants to join in, is free to do so.

5. Vision Support Centres

We host weekly Vision Support Centres in Leamington, Nuneaton, Rugby, Stratford and ad hoc sessions across North Warwickshire.

Our Volunteers arrange the venue, welcome people on arrival, make refreshments and provide a friendly face and a listening ear.

6. IT4U

Technology is everywhere. But many people living with sight loss really struggle to stay connected. If you have good IT knowledge and are interested in learning about access technology, why not join

our IT4U programme and help visually impaired people to bridge the digital divide.

7. Advice Desks

Losing one's vision can be an extremely traumatic experience. The sooner a person receives support, the more likely they are to maintain their confidence and find it easier to learn new skills and coping strategies.

Our Eye Clinic Advice Desks are designed to give information and support to people newly diagnosed with sight loss. This is a challenging role for someone who really wants to make a difference.

8. Magazine

We have vacancies for the editorial team and feature writers for Warwickshire Vision. If you feel you can contribute or have any experience in publishing why not join the team.

9. Admin Volunteers

We send out a great deal of essential information to our 3,000 members. If you live near Warwick and can help with filing, photocopying letters and addressing/filling envelopes etc then join our wonderful admin team.

10. Speakers

If you enjoy public speaking, perhaps you could make presentations on our behalf to local clubs and groups.

Our Commitment to you

Our Volunteers are often the public face and voice of Warwickshire Vision Support. You share our vision, our values and the desire to make a difference to someone living with sight loss.

You are central to every facet of the charity. You are Trustees and Ambassadors, Befrienders and Counsellors, Trainers and Mentors, Organisers and Helpers.

We could not possibly deliver the breadth and depth of our services without your support and we certainly could not raise the funding necessary to sustain our activities.

We understand that in order to do this, you need training and support.

Our team is here to support you. It is important to us, that you get what you are looking for from volunteering with us. We recognise that volunteering must benefit the individual as well as the charity - that it is our responsibility to be inclusive, stimulating, friendly and supportive.

Our Volunteer policy sets out the broad principles of what you can expect from us and what we can expect from you.

Responsibilities

Our Responsibilities

- To match our needs with your skills, experience and motivation
- To recognise that your motivations and aspirations are essential for a successful volunteer placement
- To ensure our staff are trained to work with volunteers
- To ensure you receive appropriate help and support in your role
- To celebrate success and recognise loyalty
- To respect what you, as volunteers, have to say. To listen and learn and promote good communication
- To provide you with accurate information about the charity and its policies
- To create a friendly and supportive environment
- To ensure sufficient resources are available for you to perform your role
- To resolve complaints or grievances fairly
- To ensure you have a point of contact within the Charity to support you
- To ensure your health, safety and welfare is maintained whilst volunteering with us

Your Responsibilities

- To uphold the good name of Warwickshire Vision Support
- To work closely with staff to achieve our aims
- To ensure your contribution meets the highest standards
- To encourage good two way communication and promote a friendly environment
- To support and promote our equal opportunities policy
- To accept that the Board of Trustees and Senior Management have responsibility for the affairs of the charity
- To work within the law
- To respect the confidentiality of the people you support and not to share restricted information
- To take care of your own health and safety and that of people you are working alongside
- To wear an ID badge whilst carrying out your duties

Responsibilities



Support and Policies

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Recruitment

Warwickshire Vision Support is committed to equal opportunities in all aspects of volunteer recruitment and support.

We believe that no one should be treated less favourably on the basis of their gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, religious belief or disability.

Training and Development

We want your experience as a Warwickshire Vision Support Volunteer to be satisfying and meet your personal objectives.

As a new volunteer, you will be given a general introduction to Warwickshire Vision Support as well as an induction, specific to the role you will perform. A member of our staff team will be appointed as your point of contact who will support and guide you through your activities.

If you wish to develop a wider range of skills or to specialise in a particular area then please ask us and we will see what we can do to support you.

Please note that if you volunteer for certain roles, then you will be expected to attend mandatory training in areas such as Safeguarding or Sighted Guiding.

DBS Checks

Many of our members may be classed as vulnerable adults. To protect both our volunteers and members, we ask that anyone working in an unsupervised capacity or who may be handling money undergoes a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check. We will pay for this service.

Health and Safety

Warwickshire Vision Support has a responsibility for the health and safety of all our volunteers. We expect you to adhere to our Health and Safety Policies and Procedures and to conduct yourself in a safe and responsible manner that does not put you or your colleagues at risk.

It is your responsibility to report any accident, incident or dangerous occurrence to a member of our staff team at your earliest opportunity, irrespective of

whether anyone has been injured. You must take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of yourself and the person you are working with at all times.

Support and Supervision

Depending on your role, your main point of contact may be a Club Leader or Home Visitor Coordinator.

However, we will endeavour to meet with you as often as possible so that we can share experiences, address challenges and promote successes.

The majority of meetings may be group based but we will always make time to meet with you on a 1:1 when the need arises.

Safeguarding

We have a duty to make sure that our service users, volunteers and staff are not harmed whilst receiving or delivering a service.

We will provide you with safeguarding training when you start volunteering with us.

Lone Working

Many of our volunteers work alone in people's homes. Your safety is important to us. If you are volunteering alone, you must advise someone of your whereabouts and then confirm with that person when you return home. Then, if for whatever reason you are delayed, we can take appropriate action to establish that you are safe and well.

Grievances/Complaints

If you have a grievance, we will do everything in our power to resolve the matter fairly and to your satisfaction.

Please report any grievance to your volunteer coordinator. If you are not satisfied, then you can escalate your grievance to the Chief Executive and ultimately to the Board of Trustees.

Conduct

Our reputation is based upon the commitment and conduct of our staff and volunteers. If we have any concerns, we

will raise them with you and agree steps to rectify the situation. This may include additional training or discussing a different volunteer role.

If a solution cannot be found, then we may have to end our relationship.

If a volunteer brings the charity's name into disrepute, we will terminate your involvement with us immediately.

Confidentiality

The personal and sometimes intimate nature of our work means that as a volunteer you may be party to a person's confidential information.

You are bound not to share this information without the express permission of the individual. However, if there is a potential safeguarding issue, you must discuss the matter with your supervisor.

We also expect volunteers to keep confidential any information about the charity or its staff, supporters etc. unless express consent is given.

Data Protection

All information about our volunteers is stored and maintained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Anyone who collects or administers personal data is also required by law to comply with the Act.

Equal Opportunities

Warwickshire Vision Support operates an equal opportunities policy for staff, volunteers and beneficiaries.

We will not tolerate any behaviour that discriminates against either a volunteer, beneficiary or staff member on the grounds of their gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, religious belief or disability.

Insurance

All our volunteers are covered by our public liability insurance.

We do not provide car insurance as charitable work is generally classed as 'social or domestic pleasure.' We expect all volunteers who use their own vehicle to provide documentation showing that their

vehicle is insured for volunteer use.

The mileage allowance paid to volunteers includes a contribution towards any insurance costs.

Media

We would like you to take the initiative when promoting events and activities. Your local contacts with your local newspaper are invaluable in raising our profile to both beneficiaries and donors.

Please take photographs of public activities but please be aware that we cannot publish pictures in print or on the web without the express permission of the participants.

We ask all volunteers not to comment on corporate matters. Our Management team and Board of Trustees will address any issues of a reputational nature.

Toolkit

As a new volunteer we will provide you with a toolkit. Depending on your role, this will include:

- ID Badge
- Posters and/or brochures
- Collection tins

Further information

For more detailed information or clarification about our policies and procedures, please ask your supervisor.

You can download a full Policies and Procedures manual from our website or we can email it to you upon request.

If you do not have access to the Internet then we can provide you with a printed copy.



Thank you for your support

Warwickshire Vision Support
5 Charles Court
Budbrooke Road
Warwick
CV34 5LZ



01926 411331

Email: enquiries@warwickshire.vision

Website: www.warwickshire.vision