ACE Neighbours

Active, Connected, Engaged

St Monica Trust

Volunteer Information Sheet

We are inviting older adults (60 years+) who could spare a few hours per week for six months (lessening over time) to take part in the ACE Neighbours project and contribute to the evaluation of the ACE Neighbours project.

What is this project about?
The ACE Neighbours project recruits older volunteers who can support older adults to become more active and to engage with their local community. We will also evaluate the ACE Neighbours project to understand what difference it has made for older people.

What will becoming a volunteer involve?
We would match you up with one (or more) ACE 'Neighbours' – older people like yourself – and arrange for you to meet them a few times so that you get to know one another. We would then provide you with a list of local activities, clubs, cafes, walks etc. to discuss with your Neighbour. Your Neighbour would decide if there are any activities which they would like to do, or try out, and together you give them a go!

We expect that taking part in ACE Neighbours would initially take about one to three hours of your time each visit but this would reduce gradually over time as your Neighbour becomes more confident and is happy to attend an activity or group without you.

During the six months that the project will last we would arrange for our volunteers (who we call 'Activators') and their Neighbours to get together to form small social groups – occasional and informal get-togethers where everyone can meet and chat over a cuppa. At the end of the six months if you wish to continue with ACE Neighbours you can then be matched with a new Neighbour/s.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
Volunteering has been found to be good for the health of older adults. Also, people often find being involved a very positive, interesting and stimulating experience. One volunteer commented: "I'm sitting here with a big grin on my face and a lovely warm feeling of achievement."

Others who have already volunteered in ACE have told us that as a volunteer they have…

- "Helped other people by being a role model."
- "Increased my knowledge, skills and confidence."
- "Had a positive impact in the community."
- "Improved my own health."
- "Made a difference to others."
- "Had fun!"

What will the evaluation involve?

If you take part in ACE Neighbours there are a number of things we would ask you to do. This is because we want to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. Therefore, we will need to collect some information in a scientific way. This information will be used for research purposes and contribute to the formal evaluation of the ACE Neighbours project. If it is successful, it will help us gain more funding to offer the project in other areas of Bristol. It may also lead to the delivery of the project in other areas in the country.

Some things we'd like to find out about you

We know that the ACE Neighbours project has a really positive effect on those who take part, including the Activators. Therefore, first of all we would ask you to wear a small activity monitor on your wrist so that we can measure how physically active you are. We would ask you to wear this monitor for a week at the start of the project and again in 6 months' time at the end of the project.

Secondly, we would like to spend some time with you asking some questions about your everyday life, your health and wellbeing; this questionnaire will take about 30 minutes to complete. We would do this at the beginning and then ask you some of the questions again in 6 months' time at the end of the matching period.

Some things we'd like you to tell us

At the end of six months (or 12 months if you are involved in supporting two older adults) we would like you to tell us about your experiences of taking part in the ACE Neighbours project. We will invite you to come to a small discussion group with five or six other Activators at a local community centre. A researcher from the University of Birmingham will ask you all about your involvement in ACE Neighbours and what you think of the project. These groups will be recorded and someone may take a few notes. This data will be analysed and will be presented in a

report which will be submitted to St Monica Trust. Further, the findings of this evaluation will be communicated via presentations in international conferences and publications in scientific journals.

Do I have to take part in the evaluation?

Not at all, it's up to you. Even if you agree to take part you can drop out at any time. If you change your mind about any aspect of taking part, at any stage, you just need to let us know. If you decide to withdraw, we will only ask your permission to retain and use any data we might have collected about you up to that point. You are free to give us or not your permission to use this data. If you decide not to take part in this evaluation, this is absolutely fine.

Confidentiality and data protection

Your involvement in the project, anything you say and all the information you give us is confidential. We ask for this information so that we can effectively run the project, make improvements and show the difference the project is making. Information will be anonymised and securely stored in paper form and electronically. Only staff working on ACE Neighbours will have access to the data. After ten years all data will be destroyed. If you consent to taking part, we will comply with all formal, ethical duties and obligations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

What next?

Before you decide whether to take part we would be happy to answer any questions. If there is anything else you would like to talk about, please call Catherine on 07817 632 963 or 0117 305 2365, Monday to Wednesdays.

If you decide you would like to volunteer with ACE Neighbours, please complete the enclosed application form. When we receive your completed form we will call you to arrange a time to meet you for a chat. If the role is right for you, we will then take up your references and ask you to complete a DBS (Disclosure and Barring form, i.e. a police check) form. After that you will receive training that will provide you with the skills and knowledge you'll need to support someone to engage in local activities.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with ACE Neighbours!