



Media release for Communicare

Homecoming Project launched in Southampton by Commonwealth diver

A CHARITY in Southampton is launching a new initiative this week (April 26, 2018) to help people leaving hospital who would benefit from support in the early stages of returning home.

Commonwealth diver, Gemma McArthur will be opening the launch party Thursday, April 26 at 2pm at St Mary's Church in Sholing.

Gemma said: "I am really pleased to be asked to open this event for Communicare, I think it is really important that communities support each other and this project is a great way for people to get to know their neighbours and help each other when they need it."

Communicare is partnering with the NHS to provide the service and is launching a pilot scheme in Sholing with the support of the Co-op, churches in Itchen and Monty's Hub*, which is a creative, community space.

Manager at Communicare, Anne Clewlow said: "Our Homecoming Project is a service to support people in the first few days, or even weeks, when they are discharged from hospital and is specifically for those who would benefit from low-level, good neighbourly support.

"The service is run by us and staffed by our committed, kind-hearted, Communiters who act as good neighbours; generously providing practical and emotional support."

Communicare, which is based in the heart of Southampton, is a friendly, neighbourhood charity that enriches the lives of lonely and isolated people in and around the city.

Support offered is at a neighbourly level and Communicare does not provide professional, personal care, which can be given by statutory providers, or routine cleaning or gardening.

Communiters are offered simple and basic training on topics such as safeguarding, manual handling and developing listening skills. They can choose their level of involvement and the types of activities they wish to engage in too.

Anne continued: “Our Good Neighbours’ Network already supports nearly 400 individuals/families annually in Southampton, covering 671 different tasks including one-to-one befriending, either at home or out and about, transport to medical, social or other appointments and activities, shopping for or accompanying service users, DIY tasks and gardening projects. The service offered is free, although beneficiaries are invited to make a donation if they are able.

“Through the Homecoming Project we’ve launched a campaign to persuade more people to act as Communiters, to be able to support this new initiative.”

Assisting with the Homecoming Project pilot in Sholing is the Co-op, which under the new Co-op Member Pioneer scheme is placing Pioneers into the community with the aim to develop partnerships in those areas.

Sheila Elsey, Co-op Member Pioneer said: “We have the pleasure in rolling out this programme in the Sholing area. We are privileged to help with this joint-partnership, volunteer Homecoming Project delivered by Communicare in any way we can. We are also recruiting across Hampshire between now and May 21 and interested people can find out more at coop.co.uk/memberpioneer.”

Communicare is now hoping other similar community-based groups and organisations, and members of the public, will get involved with the project in Sholing and further afield as it is launched later in the year across the city.

Anne continued: “We’re keen to hear from individuals who can help, even if they have just an hour or two a week to spare, and, also, groups that already operate in the community who could help, such as other church or Neighbourhood Watch groups, book clubs, WI groups, flower arranging clubs, all sorts really.

“Although we can help find roles for most people wishing to help with the services we offer, and will not turn individuals away, we’re ideally looking for those who have time to spare between 9am and 4pm from Monday to Friday, which are the key times for hospital discharges. These are also when those that use all our general services require assistance too.”

For further details, please call 023 8021 6022, visit www.communicareinsouthampton.org.uk or follow the charity on Twitter at [@Communicare_SO](https://twitter.com/Communicare_SO) or log on to www.facebook.com/CommunicareInSouthampton.

ENDS

For further media details, please call Manager at Communicare, Anne Clewlow on 023 8021 6022 or 07910 300232, email manager@communicareinsouthampton.org.uk. Alternatively, please contact Melodie Walter on 023 8021 6023 or melodie@communicareinsouthampton.org.uk.

Notes to editors:

* <http://www.montys.org.uk/>