

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018

CONTENTS

Who we are

Chair and Treasurer's Report

A week in the life of Assist

Coordinator's Report

Commemorations

Quotes and Feedback

Rising to new challenges

Looking forward to 2018/2019!

Thank you to all our funders

Assist



Email: withingtonassist@gmail.com

Web address: www.withingtonassist.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1062675



WHO WE ARE

TRUSTEES

CHAIR

Libby Spencer

TREASURER

Claire Hinsley-Mo

SECRETARY

Brenda Barnett

Other Members

Jacqueline Kirkby

Geraldine Yorke

Robert Nicholls

Margaret Redhouse

Pip Cotterill

STAFF

Project Coordinator



Amelia King

Cook



Debbie McGowan

Administrator



Mousumi Sengupta



Co op Christmassy Goody bags for some of our volunteers, with Scott and Craig from the Co op....

VOLUNTEERS

Sana Anwar

Barry Ashbee

Stephen Attree

Noreen Barlow

Brenda Barnett

Rosalind Blackman

Marcia Brown

Jacqueline Busby

Jackie Callow

Joana Carvahlo

Pip Cotterill

Jenny Courtney

John Crocker

June Critchley

Danny Daly

Elisabeth Diamant

Faith Escreet

Eleanor Holland

Sara Jasan

Baharak Jooshandeh

Judith Jones

Jacqueline Kirkby

David Lamb

Cal Lavelle

Peggy Lavelle

Ray Lavelle

Rosemary Mark

Alessandro Massa

Marlene McCarthy

Joyce Murphy

Robert Nicholls

Alice Nield

Pattie O'Donovan

Ruth Perrin

Humaira Quadir

Margaret Redhouse

Helen Richmond

Mousumi Sengupta

Michelle Shiel

Libby Spencer

Margaret Spiteri

Emily Standbridge

Brian Stephenson

Ellen Tomany

David Ugorji

Dee Dee Vitty

Margaret Wilson

Charlie Wright

Dawn Yarwood

Shani Yeh

Geraldine Yorke

COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT...

Assist continues to work in partnership with Manchester City Council and other funders to provide much needed support to older people in Withington, as well as valuable volunteering opportunities for local people. Happily we have secured funding from Manchester City Council for the next three years. We also fundraise and apply for money from other funds that are available to us. We constantly review and monitor our budgets to ensure that we are only spending what we can afford to. We continue to be grateful for the increasing financial contribution made by our service users whose donations and bequests now make up an essential element of our funding.

Assist continues to find ways to provide good quality affordable services which aim to support people to live happy, independent lives. This is mainly practical but also often emotional support. We understand how social activities such as the Tuesday club, Film Club, Exercise Classes, Tea and Talks, and other events, trips out and to concerts at the Royal Northern College of Music, really do enhance people's quality of life. We benefit from having a group of enthusiastic volunteers many of who find volunteering personally beneficial; enhancing their retirement or as a way of getting back into paid work. It is important to us that our volunteers feel valued.

I would like to thank our funders, including Manchester City Council and others who award us funds as well as to Withington Methodist Church, our landlord. Thanks also to our co-ordinator Amelia, new administrator, Mousumi, and cook, Debbie comprise our small staff team.

Assist relies on the time given freely by its trustees to ensure that affairs are properly run and I thank them for this. We have a small dedicated board of trustees but would welcome interest from others who feels they would have something to contribute.

Libby Spencer - Chair

November 6th, 2018

COMMITTEE TREASURER'S REPORT...

Firstly, I would like to thank all the Trustees and staff at Assist for their continued efforts throughout the year. The charity has continued to improve its organisation and efficiencies. In particular, our coordinator has been instrumental in reducing running costs significantly and increasing volunteer activity and maintaining service delivery despite a decrease in overall income by just short of 4%. Further streamlining enabled us to reduce total expenditure by over 21%.

I am delighted to report that we were successful in the Our Manchester funding application, and were awarded a three-year contract, which now gives Assist a sound basis for long term planning. Staff and trustees are endeavouring to apply for longer length, larger funding pots to sustain existing activities, as well as looking at fulfilling growing needs of the local communities we serve.

Claire Hinsley Mo, Treasurer

November 7th, 2018

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF ASSIST...

MONDAY

Tea and Talks / Film Club
Around 30 service users, two volunteers and a volunteer driver



Driving
20 volunteer drivers giving lifts to appointments, shop etc.



TUESDAY

Action on hearing loss



Lunch Club
Around 32 regulars dining each week with 5 volunteers and 3 volunteer drivers



Day Trips
Around 45 service users and 15 volunteers



WEDNESDAY

Telephone befriending
3 telephone befrienders calling around 25 people a week



Odd Jobs/Advocacy
Volunteers putting up shelves, helping to fill out forms, letters etc.



Volunteer Get together



THURSDAY

RNCM
Around 12 service users, 3 volunteers and 1 volunteer driver monthly during term time



Alexandra Park
Around 15 service users and five drivers, monthly during Summer



FRIDAY

Exercise Classes
30 attendees to 2 classes; chair based and chair assisted. 1 volunteers and 1 volunteer driver



Gardening
Around 4 gardens a week- grass cut and hedge trim during Summer time



Dog walking



WEEKEND

Community Event



Befriending/Wheelchair pushing
16 volunteers visiting 18 people a week.



COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Firstly I would like to congratulate all the staff, volunteers and members who make Assist such a lovely, friendly, welcoming place to be! With volunteers ranging in age from 18-94, every day is different, and all contribute to the creation of a thriving community group that really looks out for its older members. Whether you serve popcorn at Film Club, drive someone to a health appointment or befriend a person living locally, everyone has a part to play. Even if your role is to sit and enjoy some tasty, home cooked food at the Lunch Club, you help to create the atmosphere that can make such a difference towards reducing social isolation and loneliness. A sincere thank you to all.

2017/2018 has been a great year for getting out and about, with trips to Buxton, Llandudno, Cheshire Line and Bistro East (the Manchester catering college restaurant), and the RNCM. We also have Tea and Talks joining our monthly program, with speakers including a specialist on birds and butterflies of Manchester, a Lancashire folk singer and a talk (with original slides!) on the Belle Vue Circus..

As referrals continue to grow (we receive 1/3 from statutory services such as social and community workers, hospitals, GPs, health workers etc, and 2/3 through family, friends and word of mouth in the neighbourhood), we are looking for ways to accommodate as many people as possible. We trialled holding Lunch Club in the big hall for an experiment earlier this year but have moved it back again as people preferred the cosier lounge space! For other activities however, we hope to move to larger rooms, and are thinking about a new lunch time activity on a different day... watch this space!

Befriending numbers are also growing with 18 older people receiving support in this way as of the end of March 2018. Over 19% of our service users are over 90, and this is a fantastic service for both volunteer and older person alike; a chance to spend time getting to know someone new, sharing experiences and a cup of tea. Just 45 minutes a week can give someone something to look forward to, something different to talk about with their family and a change from the radio/tv.

I would also like to welcome Mousumi onto the team as our office administrator, and Claire and Pip as new trustees, all now essential members of the Assist team!



COMMEMORATIONS: Remembering those we lost in 2017/2018

Rita Collins, Adrine Middleton, Judith McDermott, Malvyn Paris, Edna Collard, and Douglas Davies.

QUOTES AND FEEDBACK

“My husband died three and a half years ago but he'd been in a nursing home for a couple of years before he died. I have a daughter and three grandchildren - one of whom lives with me and I couldn't do without him - but I did feel lonely. Assist has taken the edge off that for me. At one stage I was very fed-up with life but I feel so much better now.” (Member, 75)



“It's good for our mental health, sometimes I can come in feeling a bit down but coming stops the loneliness and depression. Assist is of real value to me and the volunteers deserve recognition for what they do, I feel they know people personally and I know that they care.” (Member, 80)

“I'm not under any pressure as a volunteer. I take it seriously and try to be consistent yet flexible but it's good to feel that I can say “I won't be in”. I might have drifted into it but now Assist feels like my second home. I've made friendships with the people I phone - even though we may not visit each other, we've been talking for years and have grown old together.” (Volunteer, 86)

“I was in the house on my own, couldn't even get out of bed. Then Stephen (my son) suggested to come to Assist. When you're working, you meet people, but it's harder when you get old. I come for the company. We do learn (at exercise class), but we have a laugh as well. Jackie (volunteer driver) comes and helps me get in the car, she's very caring!” (Member, 86)

RISING TO NEW CHALLENGES...

Transport continues to be a challenge, with Ring and Ride minibus services cut and wheelchair accessible taxis unreliable and expensive. We are in talks with local councillors and licensing authorities to work on improving taxi companies attitude and ability with regards to transporting our frailer, less mobile members.

More and more shops and facilities seem to be closing; this year we lost a bank, a post office and a butchers. This makes it difficult for members who can't travel far to access necessary services, so we are encouraging people to make use of volunteer help also running digital guidance sessions to help people gain independence via online services.

We are receiving a steady and growing stream of referrals for people with increasingly complex needs that are difficult to meet with a purely volunteer work force. This is probably due to funding cuts in other areas- i.e. social services and mental health provisions. We are exploring the idea of finding funds to support a community outreach worker who may be able to take on slightly more challenging visiting than a volunteer.

New scheme in partnership with **Gardens Without Borders**, aiming to address loneliness and social isolation through gardening. Individuals receive a free, three-session service with a volunteer creating e.g. a raised flower/veg- bed, composting system or wildlife haven!

LOOKING FORWARD: 2018/2019!

Alongside our current services... we've got plenty in store for the year ahead!

Volunteer drivers bringing some of our frailer members to **Alexandra Park**, for an assisted wander around the lake followed by tea and coffee in the accessible café!

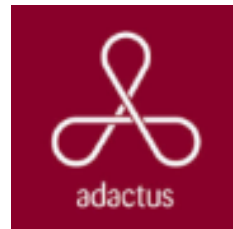
Trips Out to Llanududno, Chester, the Clink Café (café in Manchester staffed by ex-offenders), and Oswaldtwistle Mill in the diary...

The return of Positive Living! We have been awarded funding to support the lovely Debra McCallion to deliver a 6-week **Positive Living Course**, followed by a year of monthly sessions. Informal, friendly group discussing life's challenges and how to overcome them.

Digital Guidance Courses and Drop in sessions- to help people get to grips with their smartphones/tablets. Whether it's taking a photo, sending an email or online banking, we've got the student volunteers and the instructor to help!



And finally; **A BIG THANKYOU** to our Funders
and for all donations from members, friends and family.



Without this financial support, Assist would not exist to provide the support and care to all those who use its services. We are grateful for every pound we receive and spend it wisely.