

The Coronavirus has meant that everyone has had to do things a little differently. This has presented a challenge to us at AVA. We need to balance providing the best, most responsive and flexible service possible whilst safely and appropriately supporting local people and groups through difficult times.

We continue to be a community driven organisation with our finger on the local pulse. Our flexible and responsive approach has meant that we have looked at different ways to continue supporting people and groups in Ashfield, providing the best solution to meet need. This has meant a mixture of doing some things in a different way and starting up new services and initiatives to support the most vulnerable people in our community.



The list below will give you a flavour of the work we are doing right now and how we have adapted to ensure that we are continuing to provide the best possible services in these challenging times.

**Signposting** - this has always been a big part of our work. Our position in the community means that we can link people and groups to the services that they need. Often people or groups would benefit from accessing more than one service and we have the local knowledge to seamlessly wrap services around our service users whether they are groups or individuals. This is needed more than ever, as people struggle with the additional challenges arising from Coronavirus.

**Recruiting Volunteers** - we have always recruited and placed volunteers both for our projects and for other local groups. Matching the skills, interests and circumstances of volunteers with opportunities. The current situation means that people who may have felt in the past that there weren't any volunteering opportunities suitable for their circumstances can now get involved. One of the services we offer is telephone befriending, your own circumstances may mean that you have to self-isolate, so who better to become a telephone befriender supporting others in the same situation? For those who do not need



to self-isolate we are also offering volunteering opportunities in prescription collections and help with shopping.

As a small charity, we have limited resources and capacity, but we pack a mighty punch. If we can't help you, we can refer you on to someone else who can as we are passionately committed to supporting people in Ashfield.

If you are interested in volunteering, we interview, vet and carry out DBS checks on people, but this is all done remotely using telephone, email and mail. Please contact us for more information, or to register your interest.



**Computer Support** - for many years AVA has run a popular computer project - the Access project. This initiative runs on a Monday and Wednesday and provides a relaxed and welcoming environment where people can learn how to use a computer at their own pace. The face-to-face group is suspended at present, but our Access tutor, Steve, is still on hand on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday to provide telephone and email support.

**Community updates** - Ashfield Voluntary Action has always played an important role in the community; helping to make sure that local interests are communicated and represented. We have a long history of acting as an advocate and ensuring that Ashfield is well placed to benefit from excellent relations between statutory bodies, voluntary sector groups and service users. After all, we all have the best interests of Ashfield at heart. In the current situation this is more important than ever. We continue to work in partnership with Ashfield District Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group (the part of the NHS which plans and pays for services), voluntary and community groups and local people to make sure that the interests of Ashfield are represented. To find out what is happening in Ashfield, check out the News section of our website which has regular updates.

**The Living Well Hub** - Ashfield Voluntary Action is in the process of developing a new responsive and flexible scheme which will support people aged 50 and over who are at risk of isolation. The project supports people in many ways providing practical and physical support, befriending, volunteering and social activities. We are currently running a small pilot project (funded by Ashfield District Council) to test the proposed scheme and ensure that it perfectly matches local need. To find out more about the project or to register your interest please ring us, email or visit our website.

**Activity Packs** - Ashfield Voluntary Action has started a new initiative to support people who are isolated because of Coronavirus. We provide lockdown activity packs for people who have been asked to stay at home and shield, for young families, and for care homes. If you are interested in one of our activity packs, or would like to become involved in collecting or donating jigsaws, books, puzzles, games, DVDs and craft materials please contact us or check out our website.

To discuss our work in the community in more detail contact:

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