

Compassionate Neighbours

What do Compassionate Neighbours do?

- **Compassionate Neighbours are introduced to *community members* – they spend time together each week.** Community members are referred by Hospice staff, colleagues within the health and social care sector or may be self-refer themselves for support. Community members are generally people who are lonely/isolated and/or who are ‘nearing the end of life through age or illness’
- **Compassionate Neighbours generally visit a community member for around an hour a week – though Compassionate Neighbours are creative!**
The majority of Compassionate Neighbours visit a community member for around an hour a week. They get up to all sorts of things – chatting over a cup of tea, talking about hobbies, sharing stories about their local area, sometimes going out together to places they will both enjoy. Sometimes we identify more flexible ways of supporting people: we have introduced a number of Compassionate Neighbours who are couples to a couple looking for some support; some of our Compassionate Neighbours have focused on introducing two or more community members to each other, supporting the development of a new relationship.
- **Compassionate Neighbours attend ‘training’ - though it’s not training in the traditional sense.** Whilst we need to make sure that Compassionate Neighbours are aware of safeguarding and how to keep themselves & the people they meet safe, our training focuses on building on their own life experiences and thinking through some situations which Compassionate Neighbours have experienced in the past. We carry out DBS background checks and take referees from all Compassionate Neighbours who want to visit someone, to ensure that we are keeping everyone as safe as we can.

Our overriding principle is that everyone has their own lived experiences and we aim to support people to apply this to the relationships they make through the programme.

- **Compassionate Neighbours and community members are supported by our team based at Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice.** We arrange ongoing 'Practice Development Meetings' on a monthly/quarterly basis, where Compassionate Neighbours can get together to support each other, share stories and experiences and troubleshoot any challenges they may have with their matches. Anyone can contact Irene Baumgartl, the project coordinator, or Jon Devlin, the project lead, to talk through any issues they may have at any time.

What to expect from our onboarding process

1. **Initial call (10 minutes).** It's always good to talk! We'll arrange to have a call by phone or face-to-face to get to know you and to give you the opportunity to ask us any questions you may have. This is not a formal interview – though it is a chance for you to make sure that this is the opportunity for you.
2. **Background checks & application form (30 minutes+).** We'll ask you to pre-record and send us a 20-minute video of you walking through a recent project that demonstrates your end-to-end design process and deliverables. A designer or manager will watch this before joining you for a 30-minute 1:1 call to ask follow up questions, digging deeper into your process and work.
3. **'Training' (3-14 hours).** This involves three interviews covering craft, impact and teamwork. These typically happen on the same day via three separate video calls. The case study video is used as a reference for these interviews to help set context for us, and save you time repeating yourself.
4. **Spending time with a community member (around 1 hour per week).**

5. **Be part of the Compassionate Neighbours community (around 1 hour per month-quarter).** This might involve coming to our monthly/quarterly events, or meeting up with other Compassionate Neighbours to offer them support/troubleshooting if they are going through challenges with their matches.

Location

- The Hospice building is on the border of Abbey Wood & Plumstead, on Bostall Heath. Our address is **Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice, 185 Bostall Hill, SE2 0GB**. We often run training from the Hospice, it's where the team's offices are... although are really flexible and travel frequently throughout the boroughs.
- You will be introduced to a community member in your own community. We generally aim to introduce you to someone who is within walking distance of your home address – and will always discuss the location with you.
- Our monthly ***Practice Development Meetings*** are either virtual, at the Hospice, or at locations throughout the boroughs – we have met up in cafes, pubs, community centres... and are always looking for venues which are near to where our Compassionate Neighbours are based.

Benefits

- **Fun.** We'll hopefully have fun getting to know each other, introducing you to your community member and being part of the Compassionate Neighbours community.
- **Meeting new people.** You'll meet some great new people – community members often have *really* interesting stories and experiences – and you may well get to know people whose paths you'd never otherwise have crossed.
- **It's rewarding.** There is nothing more rewarding than bringing someone out of their shell and simply being there for them at a time when they really need you.

- **Travel expenses paid.** We will reimburse your transport costs – though our aim is to introduce you to someone who lives close enough for you to be able to walk.
- **Opportunities to share your adventures.** We love telling the Hospice community about Compassionate Neighbours – there will be ample opportunities to be involved in the wider Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice ecosystem and to share your stories and what you have learned about others (and yourself) with a wider network.
- **Support.** Spending time with people who are at the end of life can never be without challenges. We have an experienced team of two staff and now nearly 200 Compassionate Neighbours who you can connect with to access support if you want a second opinion, to run something by a friendly ear, or for emotional support if things get tough.
- **Opportunity to bring your ideas and try out new things to support people in the community in different and innovative ways.** We are keen experimenters and if you have ideas about how we can do things differently, we love to hear from you. For instance, we have trained a number of couples who we've introduced to other couples; people have formed their own groups to support more than one person... we encourage you to bring your ideas and make them happen.

Equal Opportunity Statement

We passionately believe that this project is for anyone and everyone – from any walk of life, age (although we do need our Compassionate Neighbours to be over 18 years old), background, religion, sexuality or disability status. We will do whatever we need to in order to support you to be able to be part of the programme. Whilst we may have different views of the world, we do not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

How to get involved?

If you haven't already had a chat with one of the team, get in touch via cn@gbch.org.uk and we will answer any questions you may have and start your onboarding process – there are some stages we can do before you come along to our training. We will arrange for you to receive an application form, so we have your details, and will sign you up for the next training date you are able to attend.

We have a full set of training dates for 2022 – the next few dates are:

- Saturday 15 January
- Friday 11 February
- Wednesday 9 March

Whilst we prefer to deliver the training face-to-face, it is difficult (at the time of writing) to know how best to do this in a way that will protect everyone and keep them safe, so the training may be delivered by Zoom. Otherwise, we will aim to hold the training either at the Hospice or at an easily-accessible venue somewhere in Greenwich or Bexley. The training usually takes one day, running around 10am-4pm.

Thanks for reading to the end... and we hope to hear from you soon!