**Compassionate Neighbours**

My name is Stacey Towler I'm the Compassionate Neighbours Project Manager for St Clare Hospice. The Compassionate Neighbours Project now has been running for over 2 years and we have over a hundred trained compassionate neighbours and we have supported over a hundred people being matched in the community with someone that is a companion that is somebody that they can have a chat and a cup of tea with once a week, over the phone or when lockdown ends, face to face.

It's a long term support for somebody emotionally and socially. We ask for an hour from each of our volunteers to be able to go and visit somebody or to talk to somebody on the phone in the current situation. What we don't do is we don't replace paid services. So we aren't a sitting service we don't replace things like shopping, and you know physical tasks. It is primarily about companionship for somebody. So it truly is about sitting and having cup of tea and a chat with someone having a laugh together.

There's no time frame so as long as both parties are in agreement and the aim is that both people get something out of it and that they both get a friendship. The criteria of the project is this aims to support people that have a life limiting illness. So people that have got a neurological diagnosis severe lung disorders palliative care needs diagnosis of chronic heart failure and lots more. And we also include in that moderate frailty. Moderate frailty is when somebody is at risk of trips and falls may be limited in going out because of their condition and may have other complex needs. Usually using a walking stick or a walker due to being at risk of trips and falls.

So, the compassionate neighbours visit once a week or call once a week to have a chat like I've explained. They are initially introduced by myself and then they take on the relationship from there. Sometimes this can mean going out together as long as it's safe as long as it's both in agreement and it isn't something that is a regular thing. It's not an expectation it's something that is an occasional go out for a coffee that kind of idea. But the primary purpose of the project is about two people coming together and having some social interaction at the moment that is obviously all taking place by telephone.

So if you are interested in referring somebody referring yourself, a family member, a friend or a patient. Then please do not hesitate to look on the St Clare Hospice website [www.stclarehospice.org.uk/compassionateneighbours](http://www.stclarehospice.org.uk/compassionateneighbours) and there you'll find more information about the project my email address which is stacey.towler@stclarehospice.org.uk but also you will find the referral form. The referral form is some basic information where it captures your basic details and anything that is important for me to know with regards to finding someone in the community to match you towards.

So if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me either through the hospice or via my email and I hope this project helps people or helps someone in your direct community. Thank you.