



Sandra O'Neill

Until recently Sandra worked at a local housing association providing social housing for people across Merseyside and the north west of England. Sandra was responsible for managing landlord's services to 10,000 homes.

Working as a volunteer in a local community café had provided Sandra with a taste of helping out and working with other volunteers. Once the pandemic began to impact on local communities Sandra was keen to offer what help she could and enrolled with Sefton CVS to be part of a shopping service. This service helps deliver supplies to people across Maghull and Sefton who are unable to go to the shops for themselves due to ailments and needing to self-protect and don't have any immediate family support but who don't fall in to the shielding category.

Sandra delivers to two residents in Maghull and Melling one who is visually impaired and the other who needs to minimise contact with other people. She goes shopping for each person once a week and delivers to their homes. This often requires an ongoing phone call at the supermarket as items that aren't available from the shopping list have to be replaced with suitable alternatives. Both residents have said they really appreciate the service and enjoy the social contact which helps to avoid loneliness and a sense of isolation, which could easily become precedent as they live alone.

Identifying a need and providing a solution to help people avoid potential crisis is what motivated Sandra to initially get involved. The purpose that volunteering provides was also attractive as well as connecting to people who genuinely appreciate you making an effort on their behalf when they may otherwise have a difficulty in carrying out usually straight forwards tasks, such as shopping. So much that could be taken for granted cannot be in current circumstances and everyone needs to rally around and help each other.

Sandra says that "little acts of kindness can make big differences to people's quality of life and if everyone who was able chipped in it's surprising what can be achieved".

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