

Growing older?

frequently asked questions



I would like to be a volunteer

QUESTION

I have recently retired and would like to consider volunteering for a few hours a week to keep me active. What type of work could I do?

ANSWER

Volunteer Centre Stratford-on-Avon District can provide advice and guidance on the different types of voluntary work available. Organisations use volunteers in a huge variety of different roles, so there is really something for everyone; from voluntary driving, to befriending, gardening or helping out with a local club. The Volunteer Centre can be contacted on **01789 262889**, or email **info@vasa.org.uk**. Alternatively, all of the voluntary roles available can be seen on the national volunteering website **www.do-it.org.uk**.

Temporary use of a wheelchair

QUESTION

I have a relative who I would like to take out on occasions. Where could I borrow a wheelchair?

ANSWER

Volunteer Services (VASA) operate a short term loan wheel chair service for up to a month for people recovering from an injury or for occasional use. This service is free of charge, although a donation is appreciated to help maintain the wheelchairs. For further information please phone **01789 262886**.

Help with my caring role

QUESTION

For the past six months I have been looking after my husband who was diagnosed with a long-term condition. I am struggling to cope now and would like to know where I can get help.

ANSWER

Many people do not think of themselves as a carer, because they are either a relative or friend of the person who is ill, and see it as their responsibility. A carer is defined as someone who, without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction or disability.

Guideposts Carer Support Service offers a range of free services which include:

- Practical advice and information
- Emotional support during difficult times
- Drop-in information points
- Carers' groups and practical training
- Social opportunity, including day trips
- Opportunities for carers to 'have a say' and influence decision makers

For more information please phone **0845 600 9980**.

Would you like to comment on this leaflet?
Please phone **01789 260108**

■ Victim of crime

QUESTION

I may have been a victim of crime. Who can I contact for support and information?

ANSWER

Victim Support is an independent charity providing emotional, practical support and information to victims, witnesses and their friends and family. Trained volunteers and staff can provide support in a variety of ways, including home/office visits and via the telephone, and can be contacted regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police. The service is free and confidential unless there is risk of serious harm. Please phone **0300 303 1977** to speak to a victim care officer. If a crime is taking place at the time, or it is an emergency, please ring 999.

■ What is a Dementia Café?

QUESTION

I have recently been diagnosed with dementia and would like some support and information to help me cope. I have heard of something called 'Dementia Cafés', but would like to know if I could attend?

ANSWER

There are currently two Dementia Cafés run by the **Alzheimer's Society** in Stratford District, which provide information and support and an opportunity to speak to health professionals in a relaxing environment. The Cafés are for people experiencing any type of dementia, and for relatives or friends of someone with the condition, so you would be very welcome to attend. Both Cafés are held monthly, but for more specific information on venues and programmes please phone **01926 888899**.

■ Getting out and about

QUESTION

I live alone and am not very mobile so need suitable transport, preferably from my home, to go shopping and to a monthly social club. Do you have any suggestions?

ANSWER

The **Community Links Transport Service**, which operates Monday to Friday across the Stratford District, would be an ideal service to assist you and requires only a simple registration process. Community Links offers a 'door to door' service between the hours of approximately 9.15am and 2.15pm for a standard charge of £1.50 per single journey, £3.00 return, anywhere within the Stratford District. Journeys do need to be booked in advance. For further information please phone **01789 264491**.

For group travel, or for journeys outside these times, you can also contact 'Back & 4th' community transport to discuss your travel requirements on **01789 471595**.

■ Help at home

QUESTION

My father has recently come out of hospital and will need help with housework and some shopping. Are there any organisations that may be able to help?

ANSWER

Age UK Warwickshire will provide practical assistance, such as light housework, which includes vacuuming, ironing, changing bedding and also shopping, if needed. This service aims to encourage and support the person to have a positive approach to their recovery and to regain and maintain independence. For more information, please phone **01926 458130**.

■ Practical domestic problems

QUESTION

I have bad arthritis in my hands and am finding cooking really difficult. Where can I get help?

ANSWER

There may be a lunch club in your town/village where you can meet other people and enjoy a good meal. To find out about lunch clubs contact **Age UK** on **01926 458100**. You could also have nutritious meals delivered to your home. For information about **Warwickshire's Community Meals Service** phone **01926 410410** and ask for an assessment. **Age UK** can also give you information about suppliers who are able to deliver frozen meals to your home

If you think that you may be helped by aids or adaptations please speak to your GP who may refer you to an Occupational Therapist. Should you be having problems with eating and are gaining or losing weight, ask your GP to refer you to a dietitian.

■ Heating my home

QUESTION

I am a pensioner over the age of 70 who is struggling to pay my heating bills. I cannot afford to have central heating installed. Where can I get help?

ANSWER

You should contact **Act on Energy** on **0800 988 2881** and they will get all the necessary details from you and advise on the best approach. As you are over 70 you should be able to get free loft and cavity wall insulation. You may be eligible for a grant from the Warmfront team to have central heating installed if you are in receipt of certain benefits. If you are unclear about benefit entitlement they can direct you to sources of advice.

■ Risk and fear of falling

QUESTION

I recently had a fall and I would like to know if anything can be done to reduce my risk and fear of falling?

ANSWER

Always tell your GP if you have had a fall or you are afraid of falling as they can assess your risk of falling and refer you to the appropriate service.

Most falls are caused by a combination of things, many of which can be removed or reduced. A range of organisations can help you to reduce your risk of falling by identifying risk factors and providing services to support you in improving your strength and balance. For example, there are free guided walks through the **Walking for Health** scheme (Phone **0300 060 2287** for details of walks near you), medication/health reviews and **Home Safety Checks** to assess hazards within your home (Contact **Age UK** on **01926 458100**)

■ Legal advice

QUESTION

I am in my sixties and know that I should have made a will some time ago, but would like some general advice on how to go about this. Can you help?

ANSWER

Age UK are working in partnership with a local firm of solicitors to provide a monthly free legal advice clinic for the over 50's. This facility is held at the Stratford-upon-Avon United Reform Church, 9.30-11.30am on the first Friday of each month. Legal experts will offer 20 minutes **free** initial consultation and confidential advice on any legal matter. For more information please phone **01926 458100**.

■ Community Forums

QUESTION

As an older person, I feel that I would like to have a say about what happens in my local area and help to influence change. How can I go about this?

ANSWER

Community Forums are public meetings led by the County Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council to engage the public in council business. Warwickshire Police also promote 'Safer Neighbourhoods' through these forums. Public views and suggestions are welcomed and many meetings are themed. For specific details of times and venues please phone **01789 260133**, or visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/communityforums

■ Unwanted phone calls

QUESTION

I am worried about the number of phone calls I am getting where someone tries to sell me things that I don't want. They pester me all the time, is there anything I can do?

ANSWER:

Warwickshire Trading Standards Service has a booklet called "Think Twice". It is full of consumer information and safety advice particularly aimed at the over 50's. There is helpful advice on a range of concerns that older people have raised, including; dealing with rogue traders, stopping junk mail and unwanted telephone calls, fire prevention at home, consumer rights and more. If you would like a free copy of the booklet, please phone **01926 414040**.

■ Activity and learning

QUESTION

Having recently retired, I would like to join some groups for older people to enable me to keep active and to be involved in local initiatives. What can you suggest?

ANSWER

You may like to try two groups specifically for older people.

SCAN, Senior Citizens' Action Network, is an initiative run by older people which aims to improve policies and services for those aged 50+, by listening to the views of each other and working together with a range of local organisations. There are six SCAN groups within the District, meeting every other month. They provide opportunities to listen to key speakers, express your views and concerns, link with events across the County and socialise with others of a similar age. For more information and details of the meetings, please phone **01789 260108**.

The **U3A, University of the Third Age**, is a national organisation of self-managed, lifelong learning groups, for older people no longer in full-time work. It provides educational, creative and leisure opportunities in a friendly environment. Local U3As draw upon the skills of their own members to organise and provide interest groups selected by the membership. There are several local U3A groups in the District, so for specific information please phone **020 8466 6139**, or visit www.u3a.org.uk

Information from organisations
correct at time of going to print

If you find the text in this leaflet difficult to read we may be able to supply it in a format better suited to your needs. Please phone **01789 260108**