

# Volunteering News from



## From the Regional Coordinator

### New members

**A big welcome to all those new members who have joined us since the last edition of Volunteering News.**

This edition is the first to be produced again by our previous Editor Sue Silvey, all on her own - thanks a lot, Sue! Please keep sending her copy for the next newsletter.

We are delighted to report that **Jean Norman** has joined Joan Whitehead's Schools Programme Team, as our Schools Placement Organiser for North Somerset.

After many years of outstanding support as our Bookkeeper, Sandra Barnes has decided to stand down - she will carry on with her driving role with Victor Rawlings Nailsea team.

We are very fortunate to have found an excellent newly-recruited replacement in Carolyn Austerberry - she has considerable financial systems experience and will work with our Finance Trustee Vanessa Kitchen as 'Finance Assistant'.

### Friends of RSVP West Region' Charity

The charity's sole purpose is to raise funds to support the activities of all our members in the RSVP West Region. We are pleased to announce that 'Friends of RSVP West Region' has recently been registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the Charity Commission.

Our Trustee group consists of **Vanessa Kitchen (Finance), Sylvia Carpenter, Joan Whitehead, Jan Snook, John Griffiths and me.**

### Recruitment and succession planning

**Please spread the good word amongst your friends and relatives. Although most new members join via our website nowadays, we know that word-of-mouth is still by far the most effective recruitment method.**

Could you also please let us know of any members who you think might like to consider becoming a Project Organiser (or team coordinator) of a group in

whatever area of activity that interests them.

Sylvia Carpenter needs more people to join her Surgery Schemes Team, in particular as **Surgery Development Organisers** in Bristol, North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset.

Joan Whitehead also needs to find **Schools Placement Organisers** in South Gloucestershire.

Any thoughts on other ways of attracting new members would be very welcome: we are very conscious of the

fact that none of us is getting any younger and that we need to have an ongoing recruitment programme to ensure that our current (and new) projects can continue to provide their essential services.

Finally, we would like to do everything possible to persuade those who are nearing retirement to consider joining RSVP. If you know of any **pre-retirement courses** we could attend or organisations who would be happy to talk to us about this, please let us know.

**RSVP West**

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**From the Regional Coordinator (continued)...**



*Bob slaving away at the first meeting of RSVP's National Recruitment Working Group.*

**National Recruitment Working Group**

VM/RSVP Head Office recently decided to set up a new national Recruitment Working Group and asked RSVP West Region to take part. Its primary aim is to identify how RSVP should tackle the twin issues of new member recruitment and succession planning.

The Group's inaugural meeting was held in London on the 27 April and the accompanying photo shows attendees Laura Brown from Norwich, Susan Bowring from Suffolk, Yvonne Ogden, RSVP National Coordinator, Colin Mason, FOCUS newsletter editor, and myself. Tammy Yugin, RSVP Head Office Administrator took the photo and is also a member of the Group.

**And finally...**

**Many thanks for all your efforts and the help and excellent support you provide. We do know that the services you offer are very much appreciated and, hopefully, also bring enormous satisfaction to all our members.**

**Happy Volunteering Summer!**

**Bob Maggs**

**Adult literacy**

**Whilst RSVP does not offer Adult Literacy opportunities we work very closely with Read Easy UK who are now well established in South Bristol and with plans to start new groups across Bristol over the next 12/18 months.**

No prior knowledge of coaching is required but a keen interest in helping others and a great deal of patience helps. Not least as we work at the pace of the reader offering 2 x 30 minute sessions per week and for as long as it takes.

Read Easy offers training for coaches who then work one to one with readers in venues that are usually close to where the reader either lives or works. The Bristol South Read Easy Committee has literacy specialist members who can lend help if needed and we also offer regular informal meetings where additional training and open discussion around individual approaches and experiences is very welcome.



*Paul Mugford presents Andrew Baber with his certificates*

If you have any interest in exploring a coaching role or would like to add your experience to expanding our committee work (needed as we are growing) please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

**Paul Mugford**  
**Adult Literacy Lead RSVP**  
**07921407102**  
**Paul.mugford@rsvp-west.org.uk**



## Home Care Lay Assessors

**Two of our volunteers describe why they decided to become Lay Assessors and how Hilary enjoyed her training and Angela her first visits:**

### Hilary Cooling

The title of the flier caught my eye: "Become a volunteer home care lay assessor". I was volunteering for another organisation at an event in Bristol for older people, and taking a few minutes off to look around the many other stands and displays. The volunteer staffing the RSVP stand didn't pressurise me and accepted I had little time to talk but could find further info on-line, which I later did. With elderly relatives who have experienced home care of variable quality this was interesting, and the requirement of good communication skills and ability to use initiative, be organised and work as part of a varied team suited my experience as a recently retired medical doctor.

The training day was well run and interactive, valuing the knowledge and experience of the interesting group of new recruits from widely varying backgrounds. Existing volunteers provided much of the input about the role, which aims to find out the views of service users about the care they receive. The person from Bristol City Council told us convincingly how the council values this extra level of information to help them monitor the quality of home care provided by several different agencies. Safety issues for a volunteer going to someone's home were carefully addressed, as was the action needed if we felt someone we were visiting was at risk of harm.



*Lay Assessor peer support meeting.*

### Angela Morrison

This is a very pertinent topic at the moment and joining the voluntary lay assessors team in Bristol has been very interesting. I have recently visited six clients receiving Home Care and most of them are very frail. It is humbling to see how older people who in years gone by would have been in a nursing home are now being assisted to live at home in familiar surroundings by virtue of three or four visits a day from carers.

Although most clients are getting help from their families their needs well exceed what a family member could provide. In the district I visited it seemed that all the carers were from Eastern Europe and although some language problems were reported they are much appreciated and obviously work long hours, possibly because they do not have dependents here or much of a social life.

As a volunteer I enjoy meeting people in a different situation to me and feel that the role is very worthwhile because it keeps a check on the system. Quite how Home Care can continue to be funded without transfer of funds from other more expensive options remains to be seen but the more we can bring this service to the attention of others the better.

“Primary Care on the brink”

“GPs facing meltdown”

“Patients who should live are dying”

## Just what the Doctor ordered ...

**These are just some of the recent headlines describing the current crisis in our Health Service. And yet, are we, as patients, maybe relying too much on our GPs to fix our health?**

Loneliness and isolation are bad for our mental and physical health. But sometimes, when your family moves away or your friends are dying, it feels too difficult to carve out a new life without them.

RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme) is supporting GPs in encouraging their (over 50 years old) patients to help other lonely and isolated patients to access groups and activities in their local community. These volunteers are offering company and friendship to people who have been housebound for some time and given up on going out on their own. Some volunteers also transport these people to their surgery appointments or help them with small practical tasks.

Health Centre staff very much appreciate this support and volunteers enjoy being helpful to their local surgery and bringing happiness and purpose into the lives of previously lonely people.



We are always looking for more volunteers as there are too many people who don't have anyone to talk to or go out with.

If you are interested in volunteering for your surgery, please send a mail to [surgeries@rsvp-west.org.uk](mailto:surgeries@rsvp-west.org.uk) and we will contact you shortly.

**Sylvia Carpenter** – Regional Surgery Schemes Development Organiser  
[sylvia.carpenter@rsvp-west.org.uk](mailto:sylvia.carpenter@rsvp-west.org.uk)

**Here are some reasons why one of our volunteers finds the work so satisfying:**

**“I volunteer because so many people are living alone and confined to their homes and it is very rewarding to see the patients we befriend improve in confidence and stamina.**

**As a volunteer I escort patients on walks, to hospital appointments, visit garden centres and provide companionship.**

**Very importantly to me, as a newcomer to Bristol, it has helped me settle in and be part of the community.”**

## RSVP West: Surgery Organisers wanted!

Due to the success of our Surgery Volunteer Schemes, we need more Volunteer Organisers in Bristol, North Somerset and B&NES.

Our Surgery Volunteer Organisers help GP surgeries to recruit volunteers (from amongst their own patients) to befriend older lonely and isolated patients of the surgery.

If you are over 50 years old, enthusiastic, reliable, enjoy meeting people, and like a bit of challenge and responsibility – you might be just the person we are looking for.

**We look forward to meeting you.**



**RSVP**West retire into action

**For more information on this volunteer position, please contact:**

**Sylvia Carpenter,**  
Regional Surgery Schemes  
Development Organiser  
Mobile phone: 07970 942464  
[sylvia.carpenter@rsvp-west.org.uk](mailto:sylvia.carpenter@rsvp-west.org.uk)





## External contacts

We are very keen to maximise the external circulation of this newsletter for recruitment purposes and in order to raise RSVP's profile locally. Please send Sue Hughes, our Office Coordinator, ([sue.i.hughes@aol.co.uk](mailto:sue.i.hughes@aol.co.uk)) the names and email addresses of your external contacts.

Bob Maggs

## Contacts for RSVP West projects

### Surgeries and Drivers Groups

Dr Sylvia Carpenter  
[sylvia.carpenter@rsvp-west.org.uk](mailto:sylvia.carpenter@rsvp-west.org.uk)

### Schools Programme

Joan Whitehead  
[joan.whitehead@rsvp-west.org.uk](mailto:joan.whitehead@rsvp-west.org.uk)

### Lay Assessors

Ken Dolbear  
[ken.dolbear@rsvp-west.org.uk](mailto:ken.dolbear@rsvp-west.org.uk)  
Jan Snook  
[jan.snook@rsvp-west.org.uk](mailto:jan.snook@rsvp-west.org.uk)

### Knitting

Judith Cains  
[cainsie36@gmail.com](mailto:cainsie36@gmail.com)

### Office Coordinator (Membership Database Updates)

Sue Hughes  
[sue.i.hughes@aol.co.uk](mailto:sue.i.hughes@aol.co.uk)

### Stop Press –

RSVP West is now  on Twitter

BD9070 - Bristol Design BCC\_June 2017



RSVP West retire into action

# Are you over 50 with time to spare and skills to share? Then volunteer with RSVP!

You could help all kinds of people, young and old, in all kinds of places. The choice is yours and you decide how much time you can spare.

Use your experience to help other people in your community. You will have fun and make new friends.

We always need volunteers and volunteer organisers so please get in touch.

T: 0117 922 4392 E: [office@rsvp-west.org.uk](mailto:office@rsvp-west.org.uk)

[www.rsvp-west.org.uk](http://www.rsvp-west.org.uk)

RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme) is a part of Volunteering Matters, the UK volunteering charity.

