



# Thank you for the difference you have made to our work

MBF: Update from St John Ambulance

What a year it has been! Hopefully you are now relaxing into the countdown to Christmas.

Here at St John things are continuing apace. As you may have heard, we have been invited by NHS England to be a lead partner in its vaccination programme over the coming months and so, alongside our ongoing community support activities, we are also getting thousands of volunteers ready to administer and support COVID-19 vaccinations.

As you know, we held our first ever virtual evening event on 3<sup>rd</sup> December to celebrate, with our family of supporters, all our achievements over the past year. We were delighted that Ryan Williams could join us for this special night. A link to a video of the event is now available here: <https://youtu.be/sX2t4LgINM8> Please do dip in for some incredible stories from our volunteers and a guest appearance from Sir Trevor Macdonald.

As ever, we remain extremely grateful to Mark Master Masons across the country for their continuing support. I know that some local donations have been made over the past few months aiding us in our effort to keep people safe in exceptional times. In addition, our Mark Master Mason vehicles continue to play a vital role in serving our communities, and I am delighted to share with you some of the ways in which these vehicles have enabled us to respond to local needs during the pandemic. I hope that you enjoy reading the attached report which comes with our sincere thanks for all your support.

From all of us here at St John, our warmest wishes for a peaceful Christmas and a very happy new year.

Victoria

**Victoria Ives**, Trusts and Statutory Manager

St John Ambulance, 27 St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BU





# Thank you for the difference you have made to our work

**“This pandemic is already giving rise to that spirit of charity and community that brings people together”**

**Charity Commission, June 2020**

The ‘spirit of charity and community’ has motivated St John Ambulance for over 140 years. Our focus is, and has always been, to respond to health emergencies, support communities and save lives. The exceptional circumstances of covid-19 have given new impetus to our work. With your support, St John has been proud to offer services directly relevant to the major crisis our communities have faced, and we will continue to do so whatever the future may bring.

## **Our wonderful volunteers**

The months from March 2020 have been unprecedented, harnessing all our charity’s assets to the fight against the pandemic.

Our skilled volunteers **have given over 200,000 hours of support to patients in this time.** We are proud to have worked alongside all the nation’s ambulance trusts and in hospitals around the country and to have developed partnerships to deliver many small-scale local healthcare projects. Our contribution has been significant, and much appreciated by those we have worked alongside.

## **How the Mark Master Masons have helped us**

In 2017, the Mark Master Masons generously donated over £3million to help fund 52 replacement ambulances, treatment centres and support vehicles. These vehicles continue to be invaluable to our work and, in recent months, to our covid-19 effort. The examples below show just some of the ways these special vehicles have been helping to keep local communities safe during the pandemic.

## ***Brighton and West Lancashire Mobile Treatment Centres – helping the homeless*** **Brighton**

In Brighton, we address the health needs of homeless people with a team of volunteers, made up of healthcare professionals and members of the public. The volunteers are trained in first aid and other healthcare specifics like foot care. Mental health and alcohol-related problems were the most common problems addressed last year, with over 500 instances between them.

We run nurse-led outreach clinics in partnership with local organisations. The clinics typically take place both within partner buildings and in our mobile treatment vehicle, which has an area where patients can be assessed and treated privately.

Due to covid restrictions, we have been running all our clinics uniquely from this vehicle ensuring people continue to get the help they need. We are also able to take the service to other locations across Sussex, including Hastings and Eastbourne where there is a high homeless population. At the beginning of the pandemic, we also travelled to the hostels and hotels that our clients were staying in temporarily as part of the 'Everyone-In' measures. In the period from April to November, we saw almost 200 people.



A client being treated in the mobile centre by a volunteer.

**Case study:** *The Brighton team had one complex case of a man who had long-term damage to his feet sustained in a war. He required multiple appointments with our nurses and podiatrist. The care he received from our volunteers has resulted in a significant improvement in his quality of life as evidenced by his increased mobility and emotional wellbeing. Our support prevented a possible toe amputation and hospital admission, at a time when our health service was under enormous pressure.*

## Manchester

In Manchester, we provide a similar service for rough sleepers, working as part of a Street Engagement Hub. In response to covid-19, our training team developed a 'covid-19 care' module enabling volunteers to work in hospitals and emergency wards for the first time. During the government's 'Everyone In' measures volunteers who had completed the covid-19 care module visited homeless people to deliver first aid care to those in need and signpost them to further services if needed.



Some of our volunteer team with the treatment centre.

As the hotels began to close it was decided that the service would change to a mobile hub. Our West Lancashire Treatment Centre now parks in Manchester city centre twice a week and works alongside the other

partner agencies. This has made us more visible not only to the homeless communities but also the general public. The treatment space has also been used by other health care services during the pandemic, such as the blood borne virus team who have been able to use the vehicle to treat their clients in a clean, safe and dignified environment.

*'Working with the Street Engagement Team has been great as it's allowed us to create relationships with different organisations and helped me to understand the support on offer for those sleeping rough around Manchester. We can offer first aid support to individuals but also signpost them to the agencies there on the day.'* Caroline Broadbent, Lead SJA Volunteer

Over the coming months, St John will continue to be there for the homeless communities in Brighton and Manchester, providing the care and compassion they rely on from our volunteers.

### **West Lancashire Treatment Centre – assisting in covid-19 research**

Since July, our volunteers have been assisting with a research study evaluating the presence of COVID-19 antibodies in children and young people in collaboration with the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust. The *What's the STORY* (Serum Testing of Representative Youngsters) study was originally intended to assess the presence of antibodies against vaccine-preventable diseases like meningitis and was given urgent public health status following the outbreak of covid-19.

For the study, 400+ children and young people were recruited across Greater Manchester. Using our mobile Treatment Centre, mobile clinics were made accessible to local residents providing a clean, safe space for the trial. Without the vehicle, the study might not have gone ahead, given the closure of clinics and other venues.

*'The SJA team could not have been more accommodating and despite venues now opening up, the vaccine research team have chosen to continue with the mobile SJA study visits. It has been a pleasure working together.'* Angela Branson, Senior Clinical Trials Coordinator

### **Oxfordshire Treatment Centre – a volunteer welfare space**

Our work since March has been very different from our 'business as usual' of providing workplace training and first aid support at events. It has demanded exceptional levels of commitment from all St John people, focussing the whole organisation on the pandemic response. Our volunteers have shown remarkable strength and maturity – stepping forwards, upskilling and taking on new and challenging roles, such as caring for covid patients in hospital wards, during an incredibly difficult time.



**Hospital volunteer Hannah, pictured left, recalls her experience caring for an elderly patient:** *"As we watched, and knew soon the time would come, I went and held the patient's hand. She was all alone, as even in these last moments her family couldn't be on the ward. I'm glad I held her hand, but I almost felt guilty that I was there, and they weren't. I now see it was a strange sort of honour, to be there when they couldn't."*

*"What is missing in this crisis is the family, the friends and the companions of the patients - all patients are alone. Although I enjoy using my clinical skills in the hospital doing ECG, observations, cleaning wounds, the greatest impact St John volunteers can have is the human element. Talking to patients, comforting them, even just making sure they have had a drink and something to eat."*

Throughout the pandemic, we have been using our Oxfordshire Treatment Centre outside Stoke Mandeville Hospital to provide a place of respite for our volunteers. The centre has given them warmth and space to take breaks away from their physically and mentally demanding hospital roles.

### **Warwickshire Treatment Centre - supporting hard to reach communities**

Since the first lockdown, there has been reduced access to health services with some clinical services and walk-in clinics being closed. Some of our Treatment Centres have been used to deliver mobile health services to those unable to access other services in their local area. One example of this is our Warwickshire Treatment Centre which has been used to support community clinics to local people in and around Coventry.

## St John's role in the vaccine programme

We are proud to announce that St John Ambulance has been invited by NHS England to be a **lead partner in its vaccination programme** over the coming months. We will lead a team of organisations to help NHS staff vaccinate the nation's at-risk groups against flu this winter and as the vaccine becomes more widely available, against covid-19.

The logistical challenge of conducting a country-wide intensive vaccination programme for covid, in addition to the annual flu vaccination schedule, is huge. In the coming months we will train thousands of volunteers to help the NHS to deliver vaccines up and down the country.

## Moving forwards

The financial implications of the pandemic for St John have been huge. We experienced, overnight, a complete loss of our normal operating income from first aid training and event cover, which made up over 50% of our income in 2019. Despite this, our volunteer deployment continued at scale and we have taken steps to reshape our organisation for the future. Whilst painful decisions have had to be made to reduce our workforce and close some of our properties around the country, we have found ways to adapt our business model for the new circumstances.

- **Workplace training** is being redesigned to blend digital elements alongside our traditional face-to-face input, with suitable social distancing.
- All St John volunteers now complete **Covid-19 care training** preparing them for the safe return of public events and providing them with the necessary skills to serve in hospital settings and support people in their local communities as covid cases continue.
- We are continuing to keep our **young people** engaged through online sessions, as well as encouraging local digital interaction, whilst we prepare to reopen our face-to-face groups in 2021. We know that young people have been hit hard by the pandemic, especially those who were already facing disadvantage. That's why we are refreshing our syllabus and developing new ways to engage and include young people who wouldn't typically access uniformed groups.

With winter fast approaching, the coronavirus and its effects continue to put our communities at risk. St John will continue to stand by communities whatever happens through covid and beyond.

**“On the 3 June 2020, I had a heart attack at home, my wife dialled 999 and the first responders were St John's Ambulance and they literally saved my life. When they came in a few minutes later I went into cardiac arrest, and the St John Ambulance team brought me back twice and saved my life, kept me stable until the medics arrived on scene. I can't thank them enough and feel lucky to be here to tell my story.” Michael Dunne, patient.**

## A special thank you to Mark Master Masons

On behalf of St John volunteers, staff, and the communities we serve, we would like to **thank you** for your generous support of our work. The vehicles donated by the Mark Master Masons have enabled us to adapt our services to meet the changing needs of communities during the covid-19 pandemic and will continue to help keep communities safe, in ordinary and extraordinary times, for many years to come.