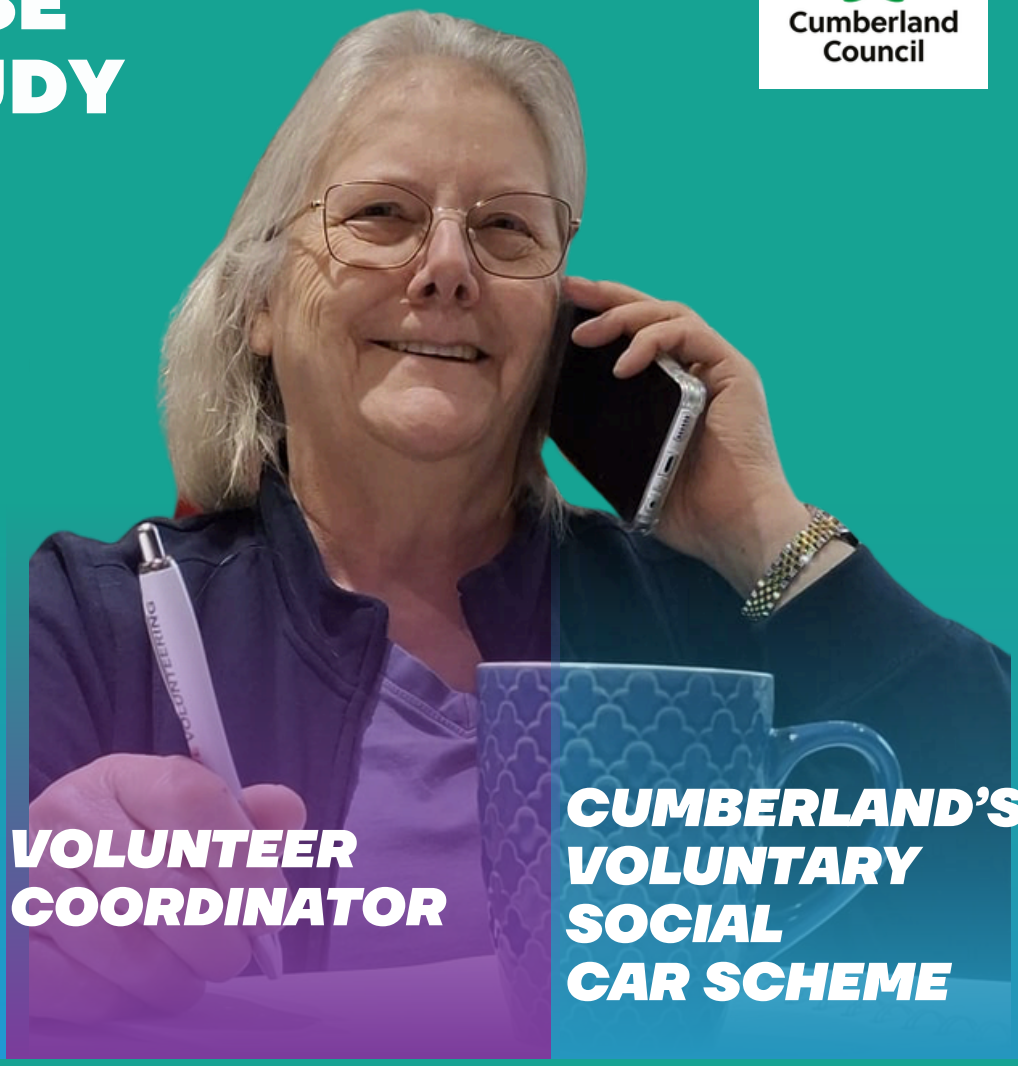
VOLUNTEER CASE STUDY



PAULINE BURDEN

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

CUMBERLAND'S VOLUNTARY SOCIAL CAR SCHEME

ABOUT

Cumberland's Voluntary Social Car Scheme is a vital service enabling those without access to any other means of transport to get out of the house for appointments, shopping, visiting friends or to make public transport connections. The service is run with the support of a team of volunteer coordinators and volunteer drivers.

Pauline Burden is a volunteer coordinator for the service covering the area of Kirkbride, Silloth and Bowness-on-Solway. Pauline's role is to be the point of contact for those in need of the service and connect them with volunteer drivers, promote the scheme locally and support the volunteer drivers.

WHY DID PAULINE BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Pauline who has been in her role since December 2025 was inspired to take it on when her husband, who is a volunteer driver for the service, told her they were in need of a new coordinator.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN BEING A VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR FOR CUMBERLAND'S VOLUNTARY SOCIAL CAR SCHEME

"The customer will phone me and ask for assistance and I just go through the criteria that I have been given...

We use WhatsApp to put a call out to our drivers asking if there is anyone available that can help....

Normally within 24 hours I have got one of our volunteer drivers saying: oh yes, I can do that".

"We have drivers that do regular trips with the same customers and that is what our customers like, getting to see the same person".

PAULINE HAS FOUND THE ROLE VERY ENJOYABLE AND FEELS THE SERVICE IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO A LOT OF PEOPLE.

"I am really enjoying it, being able to link people up with drivers so they can get out and about. The community that's within this group of volunteers is just like an extended family they have made me feel so welcome."

It's great to just be out there helping the community, and it is absolutely fantastic to know that the people that would otherwise be stuck indoors can now go out and enjoy life.

I'm still learning and it is quite heart warming that my drivers and customers actually help and support me and they tell you if there's something that they want added to what you're already doing."

BEFORE RETIRING PAULINE WORKED FOR MANY YEARS IN RETAIL MANAGEMENT AND FEELS THE SKILLS SHE GAINED DURING THAT TIME ARE VERY TRANSFERABLE TO THIS ROLE, AND THAT VOLUNTEERING HAS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON HER.

"As I am retired, I am at home a lot of the time and I do fill it with different things, but volunteering has given me a whole new outlook and sense of purpose".

PAULINE WOULD GIVE THE FOLLOWING ADVICE FOR THOSE CONSIDERING VOLUNTEERING

"If it's in your heart, then you will do it, you will volunteer and it is very rewarding..well it is for me both as a coordinator for my drivers and a coordinator to our customers. They are all just such lovely people, and our customers are very grateful for the help we give them."

WHAT 3 WORDS WOULD PAULINE USE TO DESCRIBE HER VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

REWARDING

PURPOSE

GIVING BACK

Katy Wood the Voluntary Transport Officer said:

THE VOLUNTARY SOCIAL CAR SCHEME, WHICH CURRENTLY COVERS 15 AREAS ACROSS CUMBERLAND IS LOOKING TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS LIKE PAULINE , AND ALSO VOLUNTEER DRIVERS.

"With over 100 volunteers already, delivering over 5000 journeys in a year, and our longest standing volunteers reaching 22 years, why not consider joining this fantastic group of kind people and spread some generosity?

The roles are flexible, you'll interact with interesting and lovely people, and as drivers, you can enjoy the beautiful sights of Cumbria whilst running your own errands, whilst being reimbursed the cost of your fuel".

IF YOU FEEL THIS IS SOMETHING YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN OR WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE, PLEASE CONTACT KATY WOOD THE VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT OFFICER.

Tel: 0333 240 69 65 (option 1 then 5) or 07788 396194

Email: integrated.transport@cumberland.gov.uk

www.cumberland.gov.uk/voluntarycarscheme