

Shoulder to Shoulder *April 2023*

What we do

Shoulder to Shoulder sends teams of volunteers (over 18, men and women) to do practical jobs for people who are not able to cope, on the edge.

We go out into Derby every 2nd Saturday each month, from April to September. A typical days work might include digging, clearing, building, decorating, burning, tidying, getting wet (it can rain, a lot), lots of visits to the tip, and plenty of banter and food.

In a typical year we might do 300 hours of work, for 10-20 clients, showing people that God has not forgotten them, demonstrating His love in very practical ways.

We have worked in almost all of the wards in Derby, from Littleover to Chaddesden, from Alvaston to Darley, we've worked in central areas (Normanton) out to the outskirts (Sinfin/Boulton Moor).

What difference does it make

For the client... We are often the pivot point in someone's life when instead of spiralling into needing statutory care services, that cost money, people often pick themselves up and get involved back into life.

"One of the things that had a significant impact on Ann's ability to cope was when the guys from Shoulder to Shoulder helped her ... This support left Ann with a sense of hope and optimism.... Ann describes feeling better knowing that there are people in her local community that she can rely upon"
Local Area Coordinator, Derby City Council

For Derby City Council... We work with the team of Local Area Co-ordinators from DCC, who select people for whom we would help with the most impact. Aim to create sustainable change.

"buzzing about the impact these jobs have on the folk we meet, feel very lucky to have access to such a great service that you guys provide!"

Local Area Coordinator, Derby City Council

We could not do what we do without Derby City Council, who provide us the referrals. And they would not have the impact without our hard work.

To provide an alternative to Sunday services... laudable that helping others is... we actually designed this as a way of exploring what church can look like outside the Sunday services. We invite friends to join us doing Shoulder to Shoulder, to join in with God's work.

There is something about working shoulder to shoulder with people that is satisfying, we make a big impact in 1 day, this builds relationship / team. We can inspire each other, teach each other new skills, often some good honest conversations occur that would otherwise be missed. This builds community, and we see that God does His work in each others lives through this interaction.

Next steps

We designed this to be a scalable activity, working across many Derby churches, not just the 4 we work with today.

Build up with more volunteers (the demand seems endless). We have volunteers from quite a few churches, and some who are not part of church families. But we now we want to grow with volunteers and team leaders from all over Derby. People can help out at the odd Saturday, or become a regular volunteer, all help is welcome, no skills needed, just some enthusiasm to get stuck in.

Increase the sustainable impact, link in with other local church work. As S2S we are building relationships with churches across Derby so that if we are working in your area then we let you know what we are doing. DCC are happy for us to pass on referrals to local church groups, so that a one-off S2S day can be followed up with a local friendly face, an invitation to our clients to join a local community.

Work into other cities. The S2S concept could work in other places, so we want to talk with people in other cities who want to start this up. We would be happy to share our lessons learnt.

What could you do

You represent enthusiastic, purposeful people of God in Derby; you could make a difference in Derby by looking for people from your congregation who might be interested in joining us. Introduce me to them.

Or invite us to visit to talk about what we do. We are willing to meet people, present at services / meetings about what we do, explain the practicalities and how it works.

We have a training programme for our team leaders, to grow our leadership capability in preparation for more volunteers – cut to the chase and join us.