**Press Release**

For immediate release: 6pm, 23 May 2020

**Journey Makers – a new national scheme for volunteers to help keep transport users safe announced today**

Today, 23 May 2020, the Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Grant Schapps announced that national charity Volunteering Matters will coordinate a volunteer response programme – Journey Makers – to help keep people safe using transport networks as lockdown restrictions are eased.

Volunteers, called Journey Makers, will be offering guidance, providing friendly advice, reminding passengers about social distancing measures, preventing overcrowding and helping vulnerable passengers on their journeys.

The scheme, which has been commissioned by the Department for Transport, will match local requirements with voluntary organisations that have the skills, resource and experience to support the Journey Maker scheme and recruit Journey Makers in their area.

The Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Grant Schapps said:

“We’re managing the transport network to make it as safe as possible. This week we deployed 3,400 individuals from the British Transport Police, Network Rail and Transport for London. These marshals worked with the public to help prevent services from becoming overcrowded.

From June 1stat the earliest – as we move to Phase 2 of the unlock – we will deploy over a thousand more with the assistance of charity Volunteering Matters.”

This announcement follows activity over the past few weeks, where Volunteering Matters has been working with various UK Government departments on behalf of the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership to help develop a more collaborative and strategic approach to volunteering that can support the COVID-19 pandemic. With the support of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the partnership has formed a central co-ordination cell that enables government to engage with the sector easily. The partnership will also help the government find the right solutions where volunteers may be required, as well as the right organisation or organisations to provide the level of expertise they require.

Paul Reddish, Chief Executive of Volunteering Matters aid:

“The launch of this scheme is a result of the work of the Emergencies Partnership , and has been an excellent example of collaboration between government and the voluntary sector to find innovative ways to help respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

Volunteering Matters has over fifty years’ experience of managing and delivering volunteer programmes that help local communities across the UK. Volunteers are already playing a huge role in the national response to the crisis, and we are delighted that Department for Transport not only recognise the valuable role volunteers can play in supporting the crisis, but also in the importance and expertise of local voluntary sector infrastructure in doing this safely, and to a standard that supports people to stay safe as restrictions ease.

Over the next few days, we’ll be identifying the organisations best suited to carry out this important co-ordination role in each area, and support them to make a success of this important scheme.”

**Ends**

For media enquiries please contact David Salmon on 078 0886 0357 or david.salmon@volunteeringmatters.org.uk

**Notes to Editors**

**Journey Makes project page**

<https://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/project/journey-makers>

**About Volunteering Matters**

Volunteering Matters has over fifty years’ experience of managing and delivering volunteer programmes that help local communities across the UK.

Before the coronavirus epidemic, Volunteering Matters ran over 100 volunteering programmes, We connecting people to overcome some of society’s most complex issues through the power of volunteering.  In 2019 the charity supported over 20,000 volunteers to participate in a wide variety of programmes in different community settings.

As part of the COVID response, Volunteering Matters is supporting the efforts in a number of communities throughout the UK, alongside other partners in the voluntary sector.

[www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk](http://www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk)

**About VCS Emergencies Partnership**

The Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership is co-chaired by the British Red Cross and the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA). Members include Business in the Community, St John Ambulance, Salvation Army, the National Emergencies Trust (NET), Muslim Charities Forum, Team Rubicon and Victim Support, Volunteering Matters as well as government representatives from the Cabinet Office, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Born from the major domestic tragedies of 2017, the partnership aims to improve coordination at national and local levels to enable the most vulnerable communities to better prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

[www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/uk-emergency-response/voluntary-and-community-sector-emergencies-partnership](https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/uk-emergency-response/voluntary-and-community-sector-emergencies-partnership)