**Access to Wheelchairs during COVID 19**

Despite the current Covid 19 pandemic, the British Red Cross are still operating to hire wheelchairs to those in need. The use of a wheelchair can make a huge difference to someone recovering from an accident or has reduced mobility due to an illness. It can allow someone to remain independent, speed up their recovery time as well as to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Geoff Cheshire, the mobility aids operations manager for the British Red Cross said: “No one should have to stay in hospital for lack of a wheelchair or other mobility aid.

“The lack of a mobility aid can prevent someone from doing even simple tasks around the house, let alone enjoying some meaningful exercise, indoors or out, popping to the supermarket or picking up a prescription”

“Those concerns can be the difference between someone having to stay in hospital or being able to return home, and we want clinicians and emergency responders embedded in communities to know we are here to support them.”

This service relies on volunteers who provide advice and support to people who need to hire a wheelchair for short term use and making sure they know how to operate them safely. Due to the pandemic, their current deployable volunteers have decreased meaning some areas aren’t able to operate normal hours.

Their Preston branch at Pittman Way, PR2 are currently recruiting for Customer Service Volunteers to help, especially during this pandemic. If you would like to find out more about volunteering for their Mobility Aids Service please visit [www.redcross.org.uk/wheelchairvolunteer](http://www.redcross.org.uk/wheelchairvolunteer) email wheelchairvolunteer@redcross.org.uk or call 03000 040309