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*Sheffield City © Opus Independents*

## **Major project seeks stories from residents as Sheffield's Covid Memorial Activity is launched.**

- 'Stories From The Pandemic' invites local people to share stories and experiences via a new website and on postcards available across the city.
- Contributions will form a lasting testimony and historical record of the pandemic's impact from the perspective of individuals and the communities they live in.
- The perspective and experience of individuals will inform plans for localised activity and a memorial statue in the city centre.

Sheffield's Covid-19 memorial tribute plans are well underway with the launch of 'Stories From The Pandemic'. Delivered by social enterprise Opus Independents in partnership with Sheffield City Council, Sheffield City Archives, and Compassionate Sheffield, the project aims to gather stories from the people of Sheffield to inform and strengthen the city's memorial plans.

Contributions, drawn from all walks of life, will form a lasting testimony and historical record of the pandemic's impact from the perspective of individuals and the communities they live in. The perspective and experience of individuals will inform plans for community memorials and a memorial statue in the city centre.

We are calling on Sheffield residents to submit their stories and experiences via a new website which went live this week: [www.sheffieldstoriesfromthepandemic.com](http://www.sheffieldstoriesfromthepandemic.com). Everybodies experience is important and will help inform Sheffield's story.

Postcards will also be distributed across the city, in various libraries, museums, community centres and venues, for people to leave physical contributions. They can be filled in and submitted at these participating venues, or posted for submission. These postcards will also be made available to order for group sessions and discussions within communities and organisations across the city. A list of participating venues where postcards can be submitted in person will be published on the [website](#).

The project's aim to create a lasting testimony from the city is supported by the partnership with Sheffield City Archives. Contributions from residents will be submitted to form a historic record, available now and well into the future, trying to capture the human experience of what it was like to live through a monumental moment in our global history, in a way that wasn't possible in previous pandemics. Terry Fox, Sheffield's Leader of the Council said "The group has been mindful of the timing of any memorial activity given that the pandemic is still taking place... We've all been affected by this terrible pandemic so being a part of how it should be remembered in the future needs to feel right for individuals and communities."

Individual experiences will be presented back to the city as part of a process of collective reflection. Stories will be made available on the Stories From The Pandemic website in due course, and plans are being developed to showcase entries in exhibitions across the city.

Linked with the memorial activity is the work of the Compassionate Sheffield, which is connecting and supporting people, communities and organisations to harness the power of compassion. Nick Deayton from Compassionate Sheffield "communities within Sheffield have experienced huge loss and hardship during the pandemic, it is time to hear these stories and collectively heal as a city. Whether you are an individual, part of a community or an organisation, there are a variety of ways that you can help reach out and include those voices, and we'd encourage you to help share the word and share your stories".

## Quotes

**Sheffield resident Roshan Lal**, who helped establish the project, said "We are all living through a world-historical event. No community has been untouched by the pandemic. In a very real sense, we are finding our way through this together. But what the experience of living through such a global, universal

event actually feels like is particular to every individual living it. We all stand witness to this event in our own discrete, specific ways.”

**Tim Feben from Sheffield-based social enterprise Opus Independents**, who are leading on the city-wide project, said the project is looking for as many varied contributions as possible, so that the city’s memorial activity is “rooted in the experiences of its people and collectively owned.”

“We hope this will form a lasting testimony to the impact this pandemic has had on us all, and act as an important space for us to celebrate small acts of kindness, support positive change and remember those we have lost. Everybody has a story from the pandemic - we’d love to hear yours.

**Pete Evans of Sheffield City Archives** said that as humans, “we like to know about other people's lives and what they get up to.”

“So whoever you are, whatever your background, whatever happened to you during the pandemic period, that is your individual story and together that makes up the story of Sheffield.”

**Councillor Terry Fox, Leader of Sheffield City Council**, said: “Over the past few months we’ve explored a range of ideas to make absolutely sure that the tributes we make reflect the needs of the city and that we pay our respects appropriately. The thoughtful approach we’re taking will stand the test of time and mean something, in different ways, to everyone now and in the future.

“The group has been mindful of the timing of any memorial activity given that the pandemic is still taking place. What I would love to see now is many more people coming forward to be a part of the activity as more details emerge on how they can get involved. We’ve all been affected by this terrible pandemic so being a part of how it should be remembered in the future needs to feel right for individuals and communities.

**Pam Daniel, Equality and Engagement Lead for Voluntary Action Sheffield**, said: The importance of community engagement to ensure the project is truly representative of this great city is clear. It is only when we listen with an open heart and compassion that we will hear the pain and start to heal as a city. Hopefully bringing people together and learning from each other’s lived experiences will also bring us together as a city. Our different cultural insights, how we were affected, how we will remember those that were lost, could all be used as a learning legacy for the future.

## Notes for Editors

- To contribute to Stories From The Pandemic, visit [www.sheffieldstoriesfromthepandemic.com](http://www.sheffieldstoriesfromthepandemic.com).
- A project trailer video featuring some of the early contributions is available to watch now:  
<https://vimeo.com/691359219>

- For High Res. images please visit below (All images © Opus Independents)  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1H6DrSAHmqKurFPa\\_DW6GI0A3bGxgQ4Wy?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1H6DrSAHmqKurFPa_DW6GI0A3bGxgQ4Wy?usp=sharing)