



Befriending Volunteer

Core Purpose

To support South Derbyshire residents who are socially isolated or lonely for whatever reason. Befrienders provide confidential, one to one support via a weekly home visit or telephone call; helping to reduce the feeling of loneliness and isolation and improve wellbeing.

Key Responsibilities

Maintain Consistent Contact

- Establish and maintain regular communication with the Befriendee through agreed methods.

Monitor and Support Wellbeing

- Observe and listen attentively to the Befriendee's emotional, social, and physical wellbeing during interactions.
- Report any changes in mood, health, social engagement to ensure appropriate follow-up and support.

Identify and Escalate Concerns

- Recognise signs of abuse, distress, neglect, or emerging issues, and report these promptly to the Befriending Coordinator to ensure the Befriendee's safety and access to professional support if needed.

Adhere to Service Guidelines and Boundaries

- Follow the befriending service's policies, procedures, and confidentiality standards, maintaining professional and ethical boundaries while promoting a friendly and supportive relationship.

Maintain Personal Accountability

- Attend any mandatory training or support sessions to develop skills, reflect on practice, and ensure the volunteer role is performed safely and effectively.

Act as a Positive Role Model

- Demonstrate empathy, patience, and respect in all interactions, promoting trust and building a meaningful, supportive relationship with the Befriendee.

Significance of the Role

- Provides companionship to individuals who may be lonely, vulnerable, or socially isolated, helping them feel valued and connected.
- Offers a consistent, trustworthy presence that can alleviate stress, anxiety, or depression by providing someone to talk to and share experiences with.
- Shows practical, personal involvement in improving the quality of life for vulnerable individuals.

Impact of the Role

- Regular social interaction can reduce feelings of loneliness, improve mood, and enhance overall emotional health.
- Provides meaningful engagement and social contact, contributing to greater life satisfaction and personal fulfilment for the Befriendee.
- Early identification of concerns or changes in wellbeing allows the befriending service to respond promptly, preventing issues from escalating.
- Builds a reliable relationship that encourages the Befriendee to express needs, seek help, and participate more fully in community life.
- Regular updates and communication with coordinators help ensure that the befriending programme is responsive, safe, and tailored to individual needs.
- Helps vulnerable individuals feel connected and valued within their community, reducing isolation and promoting inclusion.

Time Commitment

A commitment to a specific timeframe will be agreed when being matched with a Befriender and reviewed at regular support and supervision sessions. We ask volunteers to commit to approximately 1 hour per week for home visiting or 30 minutes per week for telephone support

Skills Required

There are **no specific qualifications or prior experience required** for this role. However, we ask that our volunteers have:

- Ability to listen attentively and communicate clearly and effectively with the Befriender and remain calm and understanding, especially in challenging or repetitive situations.
- Capacity to show compassion, patience, and sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others.
- Consistently attend scheduled visits or calls and follow through on agreed responsibilities.
- Treat all individuals fairly and without judgement, upholding principles of Equality & Diversity.
- Understand and maintain the agreed professional and personal boundaries of the befriending role.
- Understanding and respecting different cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and values to provide inclusive support.

General Expectations

- Be punctual, reliable and committed.
- Maintain a friendly and positive attitude.
- Respect confidentiality and the dignity of all.
- Have good listening and communication skills.
- To be respectful, non-judgemental and committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- To establish and work within the agreed boundaries of the role.
- To understand and work within SDCVS policies and procedures, including Confidentiality, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Safeguarding, and Personal Safety.

Expenses Reimbursement

We will pay mileage at the HMRC rate of 45p per mile or part thereof. Reasonable Public Transport costs can be reimbursed but should be discussed and agreed in advance.

Safer Recruitment

In line with our Safer Recruitment practice you will be required to undertake a **Enhanced Level Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) Records Check**.

Application and Onboarding

Step 1 - We'll send you an **application form** to complete. As part of your application, we'll ask you to provide us with details for **two people we can contact to obtain a personal character reference (these need to be people you have known for 2 or more years and not family members)**. You will also need to present or send us copies of **two ID documents for us to verify your identity and address**.

Step 2 - A **telephone call** with the relevant Service Coordinator will be arranged to explain more about the specific volunteer role.

Step 3 - Once approved, we will take you through the onboarding process, which will involve **induction, role specific training (where necessary), and completion of an Enhanced DBS check** (which we will arrange and pay for). Finally you will be required to sign a **volunteer agreement** and **confidentiality statement**.

Training and Support

A comprehensive induction and additional learning and development (where identified) shall be provided to all volunteers prior to and during your volunteering.

Volunteers are also given the opportunity to attend regular support and development sessions with the designated Service Coordinator.