

Volunteer Information Pack



Welcome

Thank you for registering an interest in joining time to Time to Talk Befriending. We are a local intergenerational befriending service connecting volunteers with older people for friendship and support. We hope that the information in this booklet will answer some of your questions and encourage you to apply to join the team.

Why volunteer for Time to Talk Befriending?

Loneliness and social isolation has become a huge problem within society both nationally and locally. Loneliness can affect people of all ages however it is proven that the older generation are more vulnerable due to:

- Problems getting out of the house due to poor mobility.
- Health concerns which mean they need more help.
- Family who might have moved away or work full-time.
- Loved ones who have passed away.

For many older people loneliness is an unwelcome feeling of loss. The fear of loneliness alone is said to cause more anxiety than a lack of money or deteriorating health. In fact loneliness is proven to cause early loss of life.

We are therefore encouraging volunteers who have a heart for older people to join our team. Our goal is to reduce social isolation in the community and tackle loneliness by working in partnership with individuals and organisation to tackle this serious issue head on. Research confirms that volunteers are just as likely to positively benefit from befriending as the people that they help. We therefore really encourage you to send off your application form today. You really could make a positive difference in someone's life.

Our background

Through in-house qualitative research undertaken in 2012, ninety-four participants aged over sixty-five and living in East Brighton were invited to express their views about the need for service provision in the local community. The results of this research highlighted an overarching need for the development of trusted lasting relationships. In essence individuals said they would like to regularly *'see a friendly face'*, *'have someone to visit me at home because I can't get out of the flat'* and simply have *'time to talk'* with a likeminded friend. This knowledge combined with the ever-increasing evidence base about the damaging and life-threatening effects of loneliness in later life, has therefore formed the basis of the Time to Talk Befriending scheme we run today.

Emily Kenward the Founder and Scheme Manager at Time to Talk Befriending says;

"The research we undertook in 2012 was gathered through a social action project that I was fortunate to manage through the Church I attended at the time. We really felt it on our hearts to try and connect with the hundreds of older people that we knew were living in the neighbouring tower blocks and shelter housing schemes, yet rarely ever saw out in the community. As a Church, our motivation for undertaking the 'Honouring Older People Event' was to remind the elders living in our

community that they were not forgotten and that we did in fact honour and respect them. As well as providing a special event to facilitate this aim, we felt it was important to ask each person what they felt would help to improve their well-being so that we could work with other local Churches, professionals and agencies we were already connected with to try and meet some of the huge need.

From the offset, we have developed strong partnerships with secular governing bodies, inter-faith groups, Churches and Charities such as the National Linking Lives befriending scheme (formerly Link Visiting Scheme), Age UK and local authorities such as Sussex Police. We recognise that we are much stronger together so if we are going to effectively meet the mammoth need to reduce feelings of chronic loneliness within the older population of the UK, unity and cohesion must exist regardless of whether individuals and organisations are faith based or not.

As a Christian I am personally motivated by putting my faith into action – to show genuine love and compassion towards older people who might otherwise feel invisible and forgotten within society. I advocate the need for Charities like ours to work with people from all backgrounds, faiths and beliefs and echo exactly what Pastor Bobbie Houston says that *“God has a higher plan for us all – faith based or other - to work together in unity for the well-being of humanity”* (The Sister Hood, 2016).”

In 2017 our service is being piloted in the Worthing area. In the spirit of positive partnership working we have linked in with the existing well respected Charity called Guildcare. Through this collaboration, we hope to identify people who would benefit from befriending which is proven to be a ‘life-line’. The aim is to evaluate the effectiveness of our work with a view to launching the Charity across Adur and Worthing in 2018 (subject to funding).

Meet the Team!



Emily Kenward
Founder and
Scheme Manager



Sally Crawford
Referrals
Coordinator



Jacqueline Reyher
Befriending
Coordinator



Karin Smale
Office
Manager



Hannah Hammond
Volunteers
Coordinator

What happens next: the recruitment process?

It is vital that older people feel confident about the scheme. They need to know that all of our volunteers are trustworthy and capable which is why we need to undertake the following:

1. **Application Form** - All volunteers are asked to complete a brief application form which is included at the end of the volunteer application pack.
2. **References** – We require two character references. We cannot accept a reference from relatives however a friend, manager, Church leader, or work colleague will be acceptable providing that they have known you for a minimum of three years.
3. **Informal interview** – an opportunity for you to find out about the befriending role. We also use this time to gain an understanding of your background, interests, skills and motivation for becoming a volunteer.
4. **Disclosure and Barring Service Check** (replaced CRB check 2013) – we need you to complete a DBS form and allow us to copy three forms of identification. After a few weeks you will receive your disclosure certificate through the post. It is vital that you provide us with a copy of the form as we do not get sent a duplicate.
5. **Induction Training** – we require all volunteers to attend a three hour training session designed to equip you in your befriending role.

Once all of the above steps have been completed we will be in a position to link you with a like minded client (who we like to call 'friend') who has expressed an interest in being part of the scheme. Please note that to find the right person can take time. We will however discuss the process with you and update you of our progress throughout.

How the linking process works

We receive referrals from numerous key organisations in the area who work with older people. Some referrals also come from family members or the individual themselves. Upon receipt of a referral we undertake the following process:

1. **Referral Form** – We receive basic details about the person who needs a visitor.
2. **Initial Assessment** – The scheme coordinator will visit the friend as soon as possible to get to know them and to assess whether he/she fits within the scheme’s criteria. If they do not fit our criteria every effort is made to refer them to other relevant agencies.
3. **Volunteer Assigned** – We endeavour to find a suitable volunteer who would work well with our friend. We take into account personality, experience, interests, availability and geography.
4. **Introductory Visit** – The coordinator will introduce the volunteer to an assigned friend. This will take place in the friend’s home. Assuming this meeting goes well; the friend and volunteer will then agree regular ongoing visits. Other forms of communication i.e. telephone calls will also be discussed at this stage.
5. **Regular Visits Begin** - Provided the above proceeds satisfactorily, visits will continue according to the availability of the volunteer. This is usually once a week or fortnightly for approximately an hour. Visits take the form of informal conversations over a cup of tea or coffee. The aim is to provide crucial time to talk and listen to the person the volunteer is befriending. The goal is to reduce isolation by developing a lasting and trustworthy relationship between friend and volunteer.

More Information

If you would like more information about Time to Talk Befriending or if you have any questions as to whether volunteering is for you, please do contact Sally Crawford on 01273 737710 or email volunteers@timetotalkbefriending.org.uk.

Guidelines

1. Volunteers are a guest of the person they befriend and therefore should respect the opinions and beliefs of the individual. It is inappropriate to impose your faith or beliefs on the people you befriend.
2. Physical tasks should be avoided – i.e. personal care, gardening, odd jobs etc. You are there to give quality time and provide a listening ear.
3. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times to ensure no breach of trust between volunteer and friend. If you have any worries or concerns please only speak to the scheme co-ordinator.
4. We encourage our volunteers to help their friends to maintain their independence by doing activities together. A balance needs to be kept between befriending and allowing them to become dependent on you.

5. Please make sure you inform a member of your family or a friend of your whereabouts when engaged in visiting.
6. You should not accept monetary or valuable gifts other than donations to the scheme. Exceptions are small gifts of nominal value, e.g. flowers or chocolates, as refusal may cause offence.

** Exceptions to this can occur. If you are concerned about possible abuse or criminal activity, please speak to Emily Kenward or one of the team immediately.*

Volunteer Agreement

We would like to ensure the scheme runs smoothly. We want to ensure that the scheme is of real benefit to our clients (who we like to call 'friends') and rewarding to you as a volunteer. The purpose of this agreement is to clarify what we would ask of YOU (the Volunteer) and what you can expect of US.

What we ask of you

- To visit your friend on a regular basis (for approximately an hour once a week or once a fortnight).
- To treat your friend with respect, dignity, politeness, kindness and honesty at all times.
- Where appropriate, we encourage you to undertake activities together, this might include things like going shopping, baking, preparing light lunches together, going out for coffee, pottering in the garden. The emphasis is on doing the activity together in order to maintain independence and promote friendship.
- To respect your friend's right to confidentiality.
- Monitor your friend's health and well-being and contact the scheme coordinator if you have concerns as soon as possible. (We have a resource of other care agencies and organisations that can help with any additional needs).
- If you cannot visit at the time arranged you will make every effort to let your friend know as soon as possible.
- If your personal circumstances change and you are unable to regularly meet with your friend please inform the scheme coordinator as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to further support your friend.
- We encourage you to attend group meetings and training when possible. Please note that induction training is mandatory.

- If you wish to stop visiting your friend you will give us as much notice as possible (minimum of two months where possible).
- To follow the guidelines given in this Volunteer application pack.

What you can expect from us

- We will provide you with induction training and safeguarding training prior to meeting your friend.
- We will discuss the needs and interests of your friend with you prior to your first meeting.
- You will be introduced to your friend by a Time to Talk Befriending representative.
- After a trial period we will undertake a review with you and your friend to assess how the visits are progressing and if they should continue.
- We will discuss the visits with you, both formally and informally and wherever possible provide you with help, advice and information regarding other service provision that would benefit your friend.
- We will provide regular training events throughout the year relevant to your befriending role.
- If you have a complaint about Time to Talk Befriending you can contact the scheme coordinator who will endeavour to respond to your issues as promptly as possible.
- If you wish to stop visiting or leave the scheme, we will help you to finish in a planned way.