

## Telephone Befriending during COVID-19– Guidance

### WHAT IS BEFRIENDING?

Befriending is providing emotional and social support to someone in need. This support can often lead to improvements in someone's emotional health, well-being and quality of life. A Befriending relationship should be based on trust and will benefit both the 'Befriender' (the person being helped) as well as the 'Befriender' (the Volunteer).

### SETTING UP

- Gain consent (this can be verbal) from the recipient to ensure they are happy to receive befriending phone calls and for their telephone number to be shared with the volunteer.
- It is recommended you complete a registration form for each recipient including their name address, tel. number, next of kin and any medical or special needs (you can then pass these details on to emergency services if they were to fall ill/not answer the phone). It may also be useful to check their personal circumstances (such as do they have any family/friends/neighbours helping them) so you can prioritise support if you get lots of request.
- Match Volunteers to Recipients – try to look at common interests and also any language/interpretation needs.
- Arrange a schedule for regular phone calls – a day, time and duration for the phone call (just like you would arrange a face to face meeting or support session) We suggest 30 minutes for each phone call is long enough.
- Ensure both the Befriender and Befriender is clear about what the service is offering. For example:

*'We are providing a friendly voice and emotional support to people who are socially isolated during the Coronavirus. You will be matched to a Volunteer who will offer regularly, half hour phone calls. Please note this person will not be a trained Counsellor. Volunteers will not disclose any personal information you share with them. The only exception to this rule is if a volunteer learns something which causes them concern about your welfare on the welfare of others. In which case information may need to be shared with their Co-ordinator, Kirklees Adult Safeguarding Team, or in some cases the emergency services.'*

### VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Most people want to help others, but unfortunately there are a small percentage of people that want to take advantage of people that may be considered vulnerable. It is therefore important that you follow some safer recruitment processes.

- 1) Ask for a Basic DBS check (you can recruit people more quickly if they already have a DBS certificate. You can ask them to email you a copy – check the name matches, any offences listed and take a note of the certificate number and date of issue). If the certificate was issued more than 3 years ago you may decide this is not recent enough.
- 2) Request 2 character references to check their suitability. You can do this by phone or email – send the referee a copy of the role description and ask if they are reliable and trustworthy and suitable for the role.

- 3) Make sure all Volunteers undertake your safeguarding training (this could be reading the safeguarding factsheets as a minimum.
- 4) It is important that you keep in regular contact with your Volunteers and also make checks in with the Befriendeds to ensure there are no issues. Supply both parties with a number they can ring if they are not happy with the match or have a concern.

#### HIDING THE CALLERS NUMBER

- To hide a number from a landline dial 141 and then the number
- From an Android device go to the 'phone', press the vertical 3 dots for a drop down menu and select 'settings', select 'supplementary services', select 'showing caller ID', click 'hide my number'
- From an Apple device go to 'settings', select 'phone', select 'show my caller ID', slide the circle to the left to hide number and back to right (green) to show number.

#### WHAT TO TALK ABOUT:

If appropriate, ask your Volunteers to check in on their befriendeds wellbeing.

1. Are they eating and staying hydrated?
2. Do they have any medication they need?
3. Are they keeping in touch with others by phone or digitally?
4. What activities are they doing to keep busy such as reading, listening to radio, crafts/hobbies, writing/drawing.
5. If they are not isolating, are they getting out for their daily exercise?
6. Check if they understand and are up to date with the latest Government guidance on COVID-19. Do they know what they can and cannot do?
7. Then move on to other more informal conversations such as the weather, families, travel, local area, aspirations for the future etc. Volunteers should let the recipient lead the conversation and only disclose the personal information you are comfortable with them knowing.

#### WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS:

The Volunteer Befriender should feel supported and know who to call if they need more help:

- 1) They should have a Volunteer Co-ordinator they can ring for support and advice, include if they are concerned about their own wellbeing or the wellbeing of the person they are befriending.
- 2) Contact the Kirklees Council COVID Community Response if help is needed with food delivery, medication etc tel. 01484 226919
- 3) Any safeguarding concerns should be reported to Gateway to Care tel. 01484 414933
- 4) If someone is in immediate danger contact 999.

#### TRAINING:

As a minimum the Volunteer should read the Kirklees Safeguarding factsheets before they start volunteering:

Safeguarding adults at risk: <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/adult-social-care-providers/pdf/ksab-1-adult-abuse-summary.pdf>



Kirklees child safeguarding factsheet: <https://www.kirkleessafeguardingchildren.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Reporting-child-abuse-CM3219.1.pdf>

It is recommended that they undertake the Kirklees Volunteers Adult Safeguarding Workbook (copies can be obtained by emailing [becky@tslkirklees.org.uk](mailto:becky@tslkirklees.org.uk))

#### FURTHER READING:

Further information and advice on befriending can be found here: <https://www.befriending.co.uk/resources/covid-19-support/>

If you need any further help please contact Volunteering Kirklees [volunteer@tslkirklees.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@tslkirklees.org.uk)

## EXAMPLE ROLE DESCRIPTION

<b>Volunteer role</b>	Telephone Befriender
<b>Purpose of the role</b>	To provide emotional and social support to an individual isolating due to the Coronavirus.
<b>Where you will be located</b>	You will volunteer from your home using your landline or mobile (if possible using any 'free minutes' by your provider).
<b>The role will typically involve the following tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will receive an email or text message from the Co-ordinator introducing you to an individual who has been referred to the service. It will include their name, phone number, a time to ring them and perhaps a little bit of information about them and their circumstances..</li> <li>You will then ring the Befriender at the allocated time and introduce yourself (using the hide caller number service). After a brief introduction you will agree a suitable day and time to ring for your regular calls.</li> <li>You will then make regular calls to the Befriender at the agreed day and time (we recommend once or twice a week for 30 minutes)</li> <li>During each phone call you will ask them some welfare questions and then allow them to chat. Your role is to listen and be supportive. You may need to check they are up to date on and new Coronavirus government guidance.</li> <li>At the end of the call you will agree the next day and time that you will ring.</li> <li>You will keep in regular contact with the Co-ordinator and report any concerns</li> <li>If the Befriender does not answer the phone at the agreed time, you will try again 10 minutes later. If you are unable to get hold of them you will contact your Co-ordinator,</li> </ul>
<b>We are looking for people with the following qualities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reliable and Trustworthy</li> <li>✓ Friendly and approachable manner</li> <li>✓ Good at listening and non-judgemental</li> </ul>
<b>What we will provide to support you</b>	<p>A Safeguarding briefing.</p> <p>Reimbursement if your phone calls (if you are unable to use your free minutes provider by your phone provider we will reimburse phone charges up to the value of 18p per minute)</p> <p>A key contact you can ring if you need any help or have any queries.</p>
<b>KEY CONTACTS</b>	<p>The Telephone Befriending Co-ordinator r XXX tel. xxxxxx</p> <p>Kirklees Council COVID-19 Helpline tel. <a href="tel:01484226919">01484 226919</a></p> <p>Gateway to Care (reporting safeguarding concerns) tel: 01484 414933</p> <p>In an emergency tel. 999</p>

## TELEPHONE BEFRIENDERS Do's and Don'ts

### Do

- ✓ Listen without distractions
- ✓ Ask open ended questions
- ✓ Build up a relationship with your Befriender
- ✓ Tell your co-ordinator if you are no longer able to volunteer, or can't ring at the agree time
- ✓ Look after your own wellbeing
- ✓ Report any issues or concerns
- ✓ Treat the person with dignity and respect

### Don't

- × Don't give medical or financial advice
- × Don't offer to do any shopping or visit their home
- × Don't provide your phone number or address
- × Don't accept any presents or money
- × Don't judge or force your political or religious views upon the person