

Befriending Referral Guidelines

Our Befriending Services are delivered by trained volunteers, matched to vulnerable people in their communities, offering weekly chat, a listening ear and a laugh.

Our Group Befriending Events are an opportunity to make connections with other people locally, take part in activities and share a cup of tea and a chat.

Our Virtual Events include an extensive variety of intergenerational activities via Zoom, with volunteers supporting clients in using technology. A programme of events is planned depending on the social needs.

To be eligible for our befriending services, the applicant/client must meet ALL the following criteria:

1. Applicants must be lonely and isolated
2. Applicants must be aged 65 or over
3. Applicants who are living in a care home can be referred only if no family or friends visit
4. Applicants must not use any substances such as drugs and alcohol as it would increase the risk during the contact/match. Moreover, our volunteers are not trained for this type of support
5. Applicants who smoke must be willing not to smoke while the befriender is present or immediately before their visit
6. Applicants with dementia, mental health issues, cognitive impairment or any other additional needs can be referred if they are able to function well day-to-day, are able to build up a relationship with a new person and benefit from conversation

Individuals who meet the above criteria can be referred to our befriending service by a voluntary or statutory agency (such as social work, GP, CPN or a voluntary group that supports them), apply themselves, or with help from a friend or family member. In every case, the service user must give consent to the application.

If we decide that a service user does not meet the above criteria we will contact the individual and/or the person who referred them to advise of this and the reason for our decision.

If the service user does meet the above criteria, we will aim to call the client to assess their referral in more detail within 2-4 weeks of the date of receiving it. If, following this assessment,



we decide that the client does not meet our criteria, we will advise of this and the reason for our decision.

If we determine that the client does meet our criteria, we will place the client on a waiting list and be in contact when a suitable Volunteer Befriender becomes available.

Safety

To enable us to ensure the safety of our staff and volunteers, it is important that all potential risk factors are detailed in the application. Please provide details of any behaviour issues, substance abuse, physical and mental health conditions or other factors which could present a risk.

Complaints and Suggestions

We aim to constantly improve our services and welcome suggestions and complaints. Please contact the Operations Manager at info@befriend.org.uk or on 0141 465 6998