



The No. 1 **Be-friending** Agency

# Impact Report 2021



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## A year of (digital) connectivity

It has been another busy year for The No. 1 Agency, enabling people to connect and engage in a variety of activities.

This year we delivered many services which demonstrate the power of human connection to build confidence and provide companionship, information, advice and guidance to many vulnerable, socially isolated people in our communities.

Our work is all about developing connections; with people, with organisations, with partners and communities. We support people to build their connections with others and the communities around them, signposting, providing information, empowering and enabling them to make the most of services available to them.

Since July 2021, we have been working towards a return to face-to-face activities in line with regulations and restrictions. We have focused on minimising risks and putting processes in place to keep everyone safe. The team implemented new protocols for telephone and online befriending and have become experts at developing and adapting risk assessments.

Our service model has been adapted to meet increasing demand and enable us to reach and support more people. Looking to the year ahead we will continue to be flexible and respond to changes as we look to increase our reach.

We continue to be user- and volunteer-led, working in partnership with local community organisations, investing time and effort in skills development and learning, supporting people to progress. As a result of this, some service users are actively involved with fundraising and three of our staff members were previously volunteers.

Now that we have spent more time on virtual connections, the organisation is working towards digital transformation, but we need funding to properly invest in the skills and tools needed. That said, we count ourselves incredibly lucky to have such a supportive community. It's a huge credit to our staff, volunteers, fundraisers and supporters that despite the pandemic, our 'Go the Distance' challenge and crowdfunder both raised much needed-funds. We are therefore hopeful that we will be able to keep growing, adapting and providing our services to those who need it.

**Sheila McPherson**  
Managing Director



# Founding Director's Message



We asked the Founder of the No.1, Audrey Mutongi, to look back at the past five years. This is our interview with her:

## Why befriending? What brought you to the idea of setting up a befriending organisation?

I am a people person and a conversationalist. Whatever business I was going to be involved in, it was always going to be people-centric. The idea came after I worked part-time as a carer while waiting to set up my business. The best part of the job was listening to people and their life stories. It was meaningful to them because very often they were sitting alone and nobody was listening. While working in care, I found that there was hardly enough time to have those meaningful conversations.

In addition, prior to 2019, loneliness was not really talked about. I didn't even know that 'befriending' was called befriending until I spoke to a funder. I told him that I wanted to have cups of tea with people and have conversations with them, and he told me it was something called befriending.

The relationship with older people began with my grandmother, who I was very close to. At the time I started The No.1 Befriending Agency, I was also aware of my own isolation. In 2003, I moved to the UK on my own and I remember feeling very isolated and unconnected. It was my first experience of recognising loneliness because isolation is often associated with older people, even though it can be felt by anyone. The No.1 Befriending Agency is the interconnection of all these thoughts and feelings.

## Looking back, is there anything that shocks you when you think about where you and the organisation are now and where it was when you started?

There was no surprise. In 2016 I wrote down what the vision was, and in a way, it transpired exactly as it was written:

*"To set the ball in motion for a movement, a call to action, for a skilled, passionate and motivated and intelligent approach at tackling loneliness and isolation in communities in Scotland.*

*To create robust and agile processes of working that stand the test of time and in which no one stands in the way of an objective, steward-like approach of business conduct."*

So there is no shock, because the vision was always there, but it's good to take stock sometimes.

## When things looked bleak what gave you the strength to proceed?

Two things. First, it's the people that we work with: seeing Shonagh's excitement when she leads the team meeting. Sheila's passion that made her come back from retirement. There are lots of enthusiastic people involved who work with their hearts as well as with their heads.

The other is my faith: I believe that this organisation was meant to happen because it answers a need that the community has. There were times when we didn't have staff and funding, and I had to tell people that I was working on faith. It is about the need that exists. But without the enthusiastic team there would be no point.

## What are some of the things you are most proud of about those five years?

The No.1 Befriending Agency is the result of a team effort, and one thing I'm definitely proud of is the No.1 team, that includes staff members, board members and volunteers. I would say my No1 pride is the No1 team. They own it.

I am proud of our awards and our achievements, such as the Quality in Befriending Award, the No.1 Amazing Woman Award in the Community Contribution category and of course our most recent, the Scottish Social Enterprise, Prove It: Impact Award 2021 for our social impact.

And of course I am proud of the impact that we made, the number of hours of befriending and volunteering we provided. When you start volunteering you're changing the world, and I am proud of the number of people who change the world by bringing a smile to someone's face. There are also a lot of non-quantifiable elements, which you cannot really add to a report like this, but which are important nonetheless.

I would just like to give my thanks to everyone who contributed to bringing about The No.1 Befriending Agency's vision in any way, shape or form over the years, even just by providing encouragement. The impact might not be quantifiable at all times, but it is changing the world in small steps.

**Audrey Mutongi**  
CEO and Founding Director

# About Us

## Our Vision

To create connections and build confidence in and through the people we work with.

## Our Mission

Promoting fullness of life and reducing loneliness and isolation through friendship and companionship in Scotland.

## Our Values

Compassion, happiness, independence, respect, courage

# The Organisation in Numbers

October 2020 - October 2021

## Befriending

**50** new matches created **26** regular attendees at online events

**72** total volunteers, including:

**51** telephone befrienders  
**5** peer support volunteers

**3** digital champions  
**1** Salesforce volunteer  
**1** admin volunteer

**9** regular virtual event volunteers  
**21** volunteers who have delivered at least one digital session  
**4** fundraising volunteers  
**3** technology advisor volunteers  
**1** training advisor volunteer

**5379** total hours of engagement, including:

**1440** hours of group befriending at virtual events  
**3939** hours of one-on-one befriending

## Care Clients

**6**

Befriending Plus

**3**

24h care

**2**

Half-day care

# One-to-One Befriending

One-to-one befriending continues to be the backbone of our organisation, Last year, however, our face-to-face befriending service had to revert to telephone befriending to ensure our befriendees' safety. Slowly, we might be getting back to face-to-face befriending as there is a real need for it coming from both befrienders and befriendees.

Through our work, our befriendees:

- Become more confident
- Have more skills
- Have more connections

The negative effects of loneliness and isolation among older people are increasingly recognised in society. According to Age Scotland, approximately 200,000 older people in Scotland will go half a week without a visit or call from anyone, and loneliness is said to be as dangerous to one's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day!<sup>1</sup>

Research worldwide, however, shows the success of befriending programs in alleviating loneliness and isolation. It also is shown to go farther: increasing confidence, connectivity and wellbeing among participants<sup>2</sup>, especially when a meaningful, mutually trusting relationship is developed.<sup>3</sup> Taking the evidence-base into consideration, we believe that befriending can

1. Reduce loneliness
2. Increase confidence
3. Increase feelings of self-worth and as a result, level of activity and
4. Increase connections.

In the following report, we explore our social impact through the prism of these outcomes. However, we believe that befriending changes two lives: the befriendees' and the befriender's. That's why we include some statistics from our volunteers as well. We could not be more proud of our dedicated team of volunteers, without whom our organisation could not achieve any of its impact.

## Thank you!

1. Age Scotland. Tackling Loneliness. Published 2015.  
 2. Cattan M, Kime N, Bagnall A-M. The use of telephone befriending in low level support for socially isolated older people - an evaluation. Health & Social Care in the Community. 2010;19(2):198-206  
 3. Janine Wiles, Tessa Morgan, Tess Moeke-Maxwell, Stella Black, Hong-Jae Park, Ofa Dewes, Lisa Ann Williams & Merryn Gott (2019) Befriending Services for Culturally Diverse Older People, Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 62:7, 776-79

# Social Impact Statistics

To measure how our outcomes were achieved during this period, we use measurement tools from international research linked to each of the outcomes. We measure people's 'state of mind' at the moment of completion once before the befriending starts (that will be our baseline) and again after six months.

Although there is a lot going for objectivity, which our measurement tool strives for, we also believe that if befriending cheers even one person up and helps them become more resilient throughout these difficult times, our job is done!



## What do our clients say?

“After Ramadan I usually meet up with people in the mosque. Everyone is dressed in colorful and beautiful clothes and there is plenty to eat. I love cooking for my friends, but unfortunately because of Covid I won't be able to celebrate it as I normally would. I was talking to my befriender about Ramadan and she is interested and listens. She is my friend and I know I can tell her anything. We also love exchanging recipes. When lockdown is over we are planning to meet up.”

“[The phone calls] mean a lot to me. Apart from anything else it's the only contact I sometimes have on any given day. It gives you something to look forward to, something to put in the diary. It's a great thing to be doing, there's no doubt about it. The one contact I might have with anybody. That's very important.”

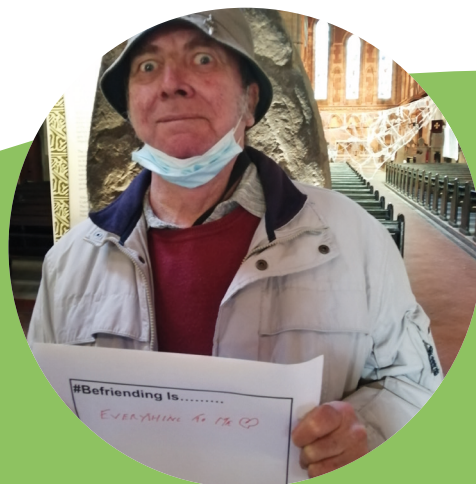
“The be-friending service has been very crucial to me over the past months. It has helped me cope with isolation. The phone calls that I get every week helped me through this tough time. [My befriender] has made a big difference to me and I cannot thank them enough for all they have done for me.”

“Having a befriender kept me going. I don't know what I would have done without her.”

“I love speaking to my befriender, he calls me every week and we have so much in common. It's made a real difference to my life, I feel like my confidence has grown. He's excellent!”

“Our calls are great. She gets me through this difficult time. It's great to talk to somebody. Once the restrictions are lifted, we want to meet for a walk in the park.”

“Signing up for The No.1 is the best thing I could have done! Me and my befriender have the same sense of humour, and our conversation just flows so well. And there is more than 50 years of age difference between us!”



## What do our volunteers say?

“I am the only person my befriender speaks to on a weekly basis (bar care support). I offer her the space to chat and listen. I don't think many (if any) people have given her the space and respect, just to listen for a long time.”

“My match's mood sometimes improves noticeably over the course of the hour phone call and she becomes much more animated.”

“I am pleased that my befriender feels able to talk and it clearly means a lot to her to be listened to. I am proud that we have developed a mutual respect. I am also happy that she feels able to talk to me in this way, regardless of the subject. I really feel I make a difference to their lives and that, in turn, makes me happy.”

“My befriender confides in me. And sometimes we have a real laugh. And sometimes I'm able to help with practical things, such as finding information for my befriender online.”

“Volunteering has given me more confidence which has been good for my wellbeing. I can get a little worried about my befriender sometimes but it still feels better to remind myself that I am helping someone.”

“It is a really positive feeling to feel you have helped someone and brightened their day, even if only for a short time.”

“Volunteering has helped my sense of purpose in the pandemic.”

“At a time when I felt like my capabilities were limited due to the pandemic, I was able to become part of the agency and help people in the simplest way possible which helped me understand that people have to offer a lot more than they think.”

“I feel that I am useful and connected to the community.”

## Case Study: Catherine & Brenda

### Brenda, befriender

My befriender and I talk about everything: TV programs, politics, everything. Having a befriender helped me a lot. I used to think nobody cared about me, but now it's all different. My husband passed away two years ago, and she's also helped me with my bereavement. Catherine is a great help to me, I would be lost without her.



### Catherine, volunteer

We get on really well with Brenda, we built a really nice rapport. I can tell that she trusts me really well now, and I always look forward to our calls. We have developed a really good bond. I think she's got a lot more confidence now. When I started calling she didn't have much of a social life, but since then she has started going to events and meet up people outside of them. I can't even keep up with her calendar! She goes to so many clubs. For example, she goes to Craft Cafe because some of her friends from the events started going. She actually had to help other clients in logging on to online events.

### Shonagh, Volunteer Coordinator

Brenda was referred to us because she was experiencing loneliness and isolation, especially after her husband had passed away. Now, Brenda is so active, met a lot of new people. It is clear that she and Catherine have a really meaningful, close relationship.



Shonagh & Marketa

## Case Study: William & Felician

### William, befriender

I was struggling a lot during Covid and it was the reason why I was referred to [the befriending service]. Life was bad enough before Covid, but during the pandemic it was really tough. It left you really isolated. It is good to talk to my volunteer and to be able to get things out. Talking to Felician helped me to get through the pandemic. He is a nice guy to talk to.

### Felician, volunteer

Befriending makes me feel that I am useful and helping someone. Here in Scotland, I found volunteering provided me with a space to connect with local people and charities. It has given me a sense of satisfaction that I have been able to contribute back to the community/country that has given me safety and support during my time of crisis. Also, it has given me the space to utilize my skills and develop them further. I think, initially it was a little difficult for me to connect to William and understand his language or his expressions – but later I found this has improved. I find that there is an increased level of trust and understanding between us.

### Marketa, Volunteer Coordinator

Finding a good match for William was a challenging task. Knowing about the challenging past and present issues he was facing, I was highly aware he needed somebody who would be mature and experienced. When I met Felician, I knew he would be perfect for William. He has lots of empathy and humour. He came to Scotland from a country with a very different culture. He had extensive counselling experience and had worked with vulnerable people before. The relationship took some time to spark but I know that it now grows stronger with every phone call.

# Volunteer Stories

“It is a rewarding thing, you’re seeing the impact first hand. And I just enjoy it! I know I helped my befriender feel less lonely and feel like she has someone there for her. I am only 21 and befriending is an intergenerational experience as well. My befriender is pleased with me when I get a good mark at uni. Volunteering is great for employability as well I think, because I learnt about confidentiality and building rapport with someone. It has also given me confidence and built my communication skills.” - Catherine



Catherine

“I have found volunteering as a telephone befriender to be such an enjoyable and rewarding experience. I first decided that I wanted to volunteer in the summer of last year when it became clear just how difficult and isolating the pandemic had been for many people, and so I was keen to see if there was something I could do to help. The ‘No.1 Befriending Agency’ offered me training and support before matching me with someone. Before my first call, I was a little anxious about how it would go; however, we hit it off immediately and we soon came to really enjoy and look forward to our weekly chats. It has been great to really get to know her better and provide support during these difficult times, whilst also having the opportunity to grow in confidence and to develop my communication and listening skills.” - Annabelle



Annabelle

“I have found my time befriending a very fulfilling and thoroughly worthwhile experience. The agency staff have been there every step of the way and help in any way they can. They are professional, yet personable. I feel comfortable chatting to my befriender and the fact that she seems comfortable sharing some of her life with me, means a lot. This is one of the most heart warming aspects of volunteering and I hope what we do provides some comfort when required”. - Scott



Scott

# Virtual Events

Since we started virtual events to replace our monthly, in-person meet-ups, we now meet three times a week and welcome 24 regular befriendees. Each event is volunteer-led, with relationships blossoming while maintaining social distance.

## Debbie, Events Volunteer

“Since graduating from University last year, in the midst of a pandemic, I have been searching non-stop for a job to kickstart my career. Unfortunately, I did not receive any response to my applications. I then changed my approach and searched for a volunteer opportunity in order to gain some experience and positively contribute. Volunteering has fast become one of my favourite things to do in my spare time. I have volunteered for various organisations in a variety of roles in the past, but the most recent one with No.1 has allowed me to work creatively with others in a role that encourages and brightens up older people’s lives. My motivation for joining No. 1 is to provide creative support to people who are facing loneliness during the pandemic, as this is something I myself have faced as a disabled person.

Virtual events are fantastic because they allow others to learn through the use of technology, and allows for greater accessibility for both the volunteers and the service users. I believe I am progressing towards my goals as I am becoming more confident and well-organised. Along the way, I have learned new skills like assisting clients in different forms of art and more knowledge of creative disciplines.

This opportunity with No 1 has also allowed me to put into practice things I learned in my degree. However, because my speech is unclear as a result of my disability, having one of the staff members read scripts aloud has greatly supported me. It has made me feel valued and included at a time I have felt neither.”

## Brenda, Digital Champion Volunteer

“In my role as a digital champion, I assist new and existing clients with setting up their devices, or with technical difficulties as they arise. Before each session, I call clients to confirm whether they need assistance logging in or locating the Zoom link. Over the time I have been a digital champion, I believe the clients have become more confident in using technology to remain connected. I also appreciate that when challenges do arise, they are open to sharing them with me so I can help them. Personally, this experience has helped me become a better communicator, as I listen to



Brenda



## Lisa, Virtual Events Assistant

“Having worked with the agency since August 2020, I have seen our clients develop and advance their skills in technology. They have not only used these to attend our events, but they have also to connect with their family and to connect with others they have met at our events. The confidence they have found in using Zoom, emailing and Youtube etc. has allowed them to join other online groups, where they can socialise and learn new skills. As an organisation whose aim is to combat loneliness, I would say our online programme has made a significant contribution to the quality of our users’ lives during the pandemic and hopefully for some time to come. Our clients now connect with each other between events to socialise and some have even arranged to meet up outside with each other as restrictions eased.”

## Betty, regular attendee

“The events give me something to look forward to. I look forward to Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. We used to be strangers and now we are friends. For example, the ladies told me about the ‘Dial a bus’ service, and told me how to sign up, which was really helpful when I had to go to an appointment. I gained a lot more confidence because I used to not like to speak to strangers but I am quite comfortable with that now. I even talk more to my neighbours, and I speak more to people in general. I have more confidence in people. I can’t thank you enough! I don’t know what I would have done without these events!”

## From our feedback session:

“When I started coming to the group, I was at my lowest, and it really helped me improve my self-confidence. I am not around people and I feel quite isolated, I am only visiting hospitals and at home, so the group really helped me”. - Emma

“My physical health is quite bad and I have not been able to go out as much as I used to, and it really makes my day to join groups like this. I don’t feel as isolated since I started coming here.” - Lesley

“When you’re living the way we are living just now, you can lose your social and communication skills. We are looking at four walls practically every day. Very, very, very, very hard. So this is quite good as well, being able to communicate with people, which keeps you thinking. And having opinions, it’s good to have opinions and learn things from other people.” - Jeanette

“When I started up, I was feeling terrible, but since I started coming here it’s been great. It gives a structure to my week. We know each other now, which is lovely.” - Attendee (name withheld)

# Connecting Scotland

Throughout the past year, we worked in partnership with Connecting Scotland to identify people with no access to digital devices.

Over 110 MiFis, iPads and Chromebooks were awarded and distributed, giving people equal access to our virtual events, as well as any medical and financial services etc. Many used their device for homeschooling while the schools remained shut, or to keep their kids entertained while they were attending evening classes or their ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Foreign Languages).

Many of our virtual event attendees tell us about how much they enjoy having access to all sorts of classes online and learning new skills. For example, there was someone who has taken up acrylic painting, learning from and using Youtube for the first time!



## Elderpark Housing Association Project

The Elderpark Project was launched in February 2020 in partnership with Elderpark Housing Association with the aim to tackle loneliness among elderly and socially isolated residents in Govan. Our partner organisations in the area send us referrals for one-to-one befriending and virtual events, and we recruit, train and match volunteers, as well as support matches and events for the people who are referred to us.

We currently have 13 befriending matches as part of this project, which also provides some of the most active participants to our virtual events. Marketa, our Volunteer Coordinator involved with the project, explains:

### Marketa, Volunteer Coordinator

“It has been an extremely challenging year in terms of reaching out to isolated individuals while also maintaining and establishing new partnerships. On the other hand, this year we managed to find our feet in the Govan area, establish relationships with other organisations and create new connections such as with Moogety Food and Craft Café.

Having these connections was so important to us in terms of reaching more people and getting them involved in our virtual events and finding them befriending matches. Another great example of partnership working was our Harvest Festival, which we organised together with Moogety Food and Craft Café after securing funding from ASDA.”



## Case Study: Magdalene & Maureen

### Maureen, befriender

I decided to approach The No.1 Befriending Agency via Charlotte from Craft Café because I wanted to speak to somebody who wasn't in my family! Don't get me wrong, I appreciate talking to my sister and my cousin, but it is nice talking about different things to different people. Magdalen and I have good phone calls and I look forward to them. Sometimes she talks about her work as an actress, and she asks about me. We discovered we like the same songs and we both like sci-fi! I can give her advice on where to go travelling in Scotland and other things.

### Magdalene, volunteer

Maureen is someone who has enriched my life a lot. She shares with me the way she sees the world and I learn a lot from listening to her. She shares her wisdom with me as she tells me about her memories. I think we both really enjoy the time we have together. She is like a family member who is genuinely interested in how I am doing, and shares with me how she is doing and getting on in a really difficult world at the moment. I am very proud that she feels safe enough with me to share her memories with me. I also think she feels appreciated because I give her space to share these with me. Having a real Scottish friend is not something I expected when I moved to Glasgow, and I hope to stay in touch with Maureen for as long as I can.

### Marketa, Volunteer Coordinator

“It has been great seeing Maureen and Magdalen's relationship flourish. They complement each other and it is obvious that they are very keen on keeping in touch with each other. Their calls are full of understanding, joy and mutual respect. I believe that being matched during the pandemic enriched both of them, Magdalen who moved from America to Glasgow during the lockdown and Maureen who could not attend her beloved events in Craft Cafe.”

# Digital Participation Project

The Digital Connections Project started in September 2021 with funding from the Digital Participation Charter 8 Fund. It welcomes volunteers from vulnerable groups to build their individual skills and increase their confidence. We are committed to supporting their development in a way that reaches beyond volunteering, and our volunteer coordinator helps create skills-based goals to access opportunities (e.g. employment) in the future - all while the volunteers donate their time to improve the wellbeing and happiness of others.

Participants to this project include single parents, young people, individuals from the BAME community, unemployed people and people living with a disability. The project sees people come together through digital technology to take part in telephone befriending and online group activities. Some examples of what they do include delivering online workshops to pass their own skills onto our clients, social events, physical activities, heritage and culture, music and creative arts, and well-being sessions. A key component of the project is the provision of the digital equipment, wherever necessary, to ensure everyone can take part.

We have also been able to undertake substantial knowledge exchange with key partners and this growth has ensured the recruitment of volunteers who can help to develop the dynamic of the organisation for service users, strengthening the friendly and inclusive environment that has been created. Our strong relationship with external partners has seen seven volunteers join us already by October, but we continue to be open to any individual from the above groups who would like to contact us directly and get involved.

## Jennifer, Volunteer Coordinator:

“In the few months since this project’s started, I’ve met some amazing volunteers who have so much to offer our clients. They have a passion to help end isolation and loneliness in any way they can, and being able to help them implement a skills development plan to make the most of the experience is really rewarding. It’s been a privilege to be able to offer the equipment to ensure they can get online and that everyone can benefit from their involvement. From Arts to IT skills to great people management, they all have something unique to bring to the organisation. I can’t wait to see where they go from here - and I know that, as No.1 volunteers, their time with us will last long past when their personal goals are met.”



# Care

We are a company that exists for a social mission. In addition to befriending, we provide personal care services across Scotland. These are paid for services and profit from these services is reinvested into the organisation to create positive social change through befriending.

At The No.1 Care Agency, we employ the same ethos and practices as our well-established befriending service, matching service users with a hand-picked carer who not only caters to any medical, physical or mental needs, but can offer friendship and companionship that reflects their uniqueness, individuality and life experience. We deliver care services in several local authorities and we are commissioned to provide care around Scotland.

Our support at home service is a tailored person-centred care service for people who would like to receive the care they need in the warmth, safety and familiarity of their own home.

There are three categories of this service:

- **24-hour care:** day and night care in service users’ homes.
- **Sleepover care:** overnight support duty for all night, with morning assistance if needed.
- **Half day care:** minimum of 3 hours each visit. Can include shopping, household tasks and going out and about, personal care, companionship.
- **Befriending Plus:** based on companionship and can include certain elements of care care, such as going for a walk or accompanying people to a social event, but does not include personal care. This service combines the best from both care and befriending. Through Befriending Plus, we support vulnerable people that are most at risk of loneliness, and empower them to live their life to the fullest and to be active in their community.



## Ethel, care service user

“Everything has been brilliant. The staff has been beyond my expectations and go above and beyond”.

## To Ganiyat, a carer, from Mary, a service user:

“May you always have an angel by your side,  
Watching out for you, in everything you do,  
Reminding you to keep believing in brighter days  
Finding ways for your wishes and dreams  
To take you to beautiful places,  
Giving you the hope, that is as certain as the sun,  
Giving you the strength of Trinity as your guide,  
May you always have love and comfort,  
And may you always have an angel by your side.

Love from Mary, and thank you for everything you do for me, I am so grateful.”



*Ganiyat & Mary*

## Care Inspectorate Review

The Care Inspectorate carried out an inspection on our care service in August, and this was their feedback:

“We gathered the views of people using the service and their relatives. We heard that staff were courteous, always arrived on time and communication throughout was to a high standard. People praised the service for making a difference in their life. The following are some of the comments made:

‘They really do go above and beyond. There’s many examples where they do more than expected.’

‘I trust them and it feels good being reassured that [person’s name] is safe and happy.’

‘They ask what we want to achieve, what skills we want to develop, and our needs and wants are seen as important.’

Relatives told us about the kindness and commitment of staff. There was also praise for staff knowledge of people’s health needs, which were varied and complex. [...] Each person that used the service had a care plan. These plans were well balanced, capturing people’s health needs as well as their personal interests and goals.”



# Fundraising Activities

## Go the Distance

The 'Go the Distance' challenge asked for participants to get sponsored to travel 62 miles in the month of July. Walking, cycling, running - just not driving! This mission was fully organised by our volunteer fundraising team and came about once they discovered that there are currently 100,000 older adults in Scotland who feel lonely all the time. This is a shocking number and does not include all isolated adults over 18, so that figure is even higher! If 100k people are converted into 100k metres, that is the equivalent of 62 miles.

The challenge was taken up by friends of the No1 across the world. We've had folks walking, running and cycling, and others really thinking outside the box: we've had paddle boarders, swimmers, kayakers, and a participant was even rowing her way to the finish line! On the event that drew the challenge to a close, Connie, one of our Volunteer Coordinators revealed the final numbers: the No.1 team completed more than 1404 miles (the equivalent of someone walking from Glasgow to Madrid) and managed to raise more than £1400! Those who participated in the challenge were also entered into a raffle and could win one of the valuable donated prizes, including pieces of jewellery from John McKay Jewellers, and a coffee set from Old Mill Coffee.

### Why 62 miles?

Did you know?

Across Scotland 100,000 elderly individuals report feeling lonely almost all of the time.

We worked it out for you, 100,000 metres is the equivalent of...62 miles!

Walk, run, jog, swim...it's up to you!

#GoTheDistance



Some of our "Go the Distance" fundraisers!

## Crowdfunding

In August, we launched another fundraising campaign through Crowdfunder, in partnership with the Aviva Community Fund. We smashed past our initial target of £1000 in just under a fortnight. We then extended our target to £1500, which we reached in another two weeks! So we were excited to be able to extend it once again, and by the end of the six weeks, we had raised a grand total of £1606!

## Knitting Cuppa

In December 2020, one of our befriendees, Betty kindly offered to hold an online 'masterclass' of knitting, open to anyone who would be wanting to also donate to our 'Caring Cuppa' campaign. There was lots of hilarity, as expected, and the festive spirit was felt by everyone.

All the money raised from our fundraising campaigns will have gone into supporting our befriending and group activities. A huge thank you to everyone who donated, and all our partners and runners/walkers/kayakers etc. who took part.



## Different Types of Volunteering

We consider ourselves very lucky to have an amazing group of volunteers helping us along the way, including two highly accomplished professionals, who help us with our operations 'in the background'.

### Pam, Volunteer Learning Development Advisor

'I am excited work with the dedicated team of the No.1 Befriending Agency. My career has involved helping people of all ages and from diverse and difficult backgrounds to develop themselves through learning and training. I am proud to offer my skills and experience to this worthwhile organisation, their staff and service users. As a carer myself, I know the positive impact that support and befriending have for those isolated and dependent on others.'



### Maree, Salesforce Volunteer

'Volunteering with The No.1 Befriending Agency has been a fantastic experience. Meeting with Joanna and Lea has given me a real sense of accomplishment, knowing I am supporting their important work and adding value to their daily operations. It's been incredibly flexible and I hope many more people will benefit from the B friending scheme as a result. I feel privileged to give back and help.'

### Catherine - Positive Role Model

Congratulations to our wonderful volunteer, Catherine Mackie, who has been nominated for the National Diversity Award's Positive Role Model Award, in part thanks to her volunteering with us. She is a matched telephone befriender and regularly leads online events such as quizzes, murder mysteries and social discussions - and is well-loved by the members who attend. The events have helped our befriendees, who are isolated and vulnerable due to COVID-19, feel more connected and less lonely.



# Events

## Harvest Festival

This September, we got the opportunity to go to Moogety Garden to celebrate the harvest with some friends from Craft Cafe and Moogety Foods. The weather was on our side and we were very happy that some of our service users could join us for the celebrations. There were crafts, music (courtesy of both a piper and a guitarist), dancing, a fire to gather around and of course food; everything you need to celebrate the season! A huge thank you to our wonderful friends at Craft Cafe and Moogety Foods for putting on a day to remember.

## Govan Stones

Taking advantage of loosening restrictions, in October, our group of befriendeds made a field trip to Govan Stones and the Fairfield Heritage Centre with some of our wonderful volunteers (and one dog!) During the visit we had the opportunity to tour both venues and then regroup for sandwiches, a cup of tea and a good natter. For many of the clients who attended this was their first outing since the beginning of the pandemic. This event was the first one supported by the funding we have received from the ASDA Foundation to help us get our activities 'back on track' after lockdown.



# Social Enterprise Award

In November 2021, we won the 'Prove it: Social Impact Award', which we had been shortlisted for alongside three other organisations in the Social Enterprise Awards Scotland 2021. The awards recognise social enterprises, charities and community organisations that deliver social and environmental impact in Scotland. We're obviously very proud of this achievement, which of course would not have been possible without a wonderful, committed and hard-working group of volunteers and staff. As winners of the Award, we are now finalists for the UK Social Enterprise Award!



**SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AWARDS SCOTLAND**

**#SocEntAwards21**

**Meet our 2021 Prove it: Social Impact Award Winner!**



The No. 1 Be-friending Agency



# Chair's Message

Reflecting on a year of challenges, where we have been in and out of restrictions, concerned for our families and friends wellbeing and lived life as we have never had to live before, I continue to be in awe of our colleagues and volunteers who provide amazing care and compassion for those in need.

I have only been involved with The No.1 Befriending Agency for over a year and as the Chair for only a few months but I am incredibly proud of the achievement and programmes we have been involved in, despite all the challenges. The team have had to think creatively to engage people and encourage our service users to use technology that they may have never had to use before, to ensure they have meaningful connections and bring some joy into their lives, that they may otherwise have lost.

I have myself joined one of the online sessions held, during one of the periods of lockdown, and it was "desert island discs", there was a lovely group of people, many of which this form of communication was new and alien. At times, we couldn't work out how to unmute but that did not stop us having incredible fun. There was a real joy in picking the music we wanted to hear, singing along to and giving our views at the end, whether or not these were good or bad views! There were stories behind the music, which were fascinating, and this connection enabled people to share and remember memories. When I logged off, I reflected on how difficult it must be to log on, when you may feel anxious or lonely, but the joy I saw and heard from that one video call must have made such a difference to those attending on that day.

It's not just video calls that The No.1 Befriending Agency does, they carry out a remarkable service. You will have seen this earlier in the report and it will have only provided a small insight into what we do. The remarkable part of those engagement and connections is the growth in self-confidence and joy that it can bring. Something so little can often be the highlight of the week for our clients - you can't put a price on that.



Finally, my deepest thanks go to all the volunteers and staff within the organisation. This would not be a remarkable organisation without you. You have worked in uncharted territory, re-imagined ways to keep care, connections and engagement with our clients. And you brought joy and kindness to their lives.

Who knows what the remainder of 2021 will bring but, I am in no doubt that you will continue to do the best you can and you will continue to make a positive impact to client's lives.

**Marlene Boyd, Chair**



The No1 Team





The No. 1 **Be-friending** Agency

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