

Impact Report

2022



Table of Contents

Introduction by our Managing Director	2
Founding Director's Message	4
About Us	6
2022 In Numbers	6
Our Services	7
Social Impact Statistics	9
What Our Clients Say	10
What Our Volunteers Say	11
The Heritage Project	12
Elderpark Project	16
Virtual Events	18
Digital Connections Project	21
Winter Wellbeing	22
Wellbeing Fund	24
Volunteer Stories	25
Our Volunteers	27
Student Placements	28
No 1 Care Agency	29
Fundraising Activities	33
Social Enterprise Award	35
Scotland's Champions Awards	35
Chair's Letter	36

Introduction

September 2021 marked The No.1 Befriending Agency 5th anniversary year. What started as a very small organisation is still quite small, but it delivers a huge social impact!

Bringing people together continued to be the cornerstone of our work this year, which has been filled with challenges and many noteworthy moments - we were awarded the Scottish Social Enterprise Impact Award : Prove It; our CEO was nominated for a Scottish Community Champion award in recognition of her achievements; and we secured Heritage Lottery funding for a new project.



Social isolation and loneliness is recognised as an increasing health issue, not just due to the pandemic. Social relationships are central to personal well-being and are crucial for maintaining physical health, mental health and a holistic sense of meaning and purpose.

The feedback from befriendeds illustrate the high quality of our services and ability to adapt to challenging circumstances like the pandemic, when we continued to provide services without interruption, transforming face-to-face services into online and telephone support.

A huge challenge was to recommence face-to-face services and volunteering safely and as quickly as we possibly could. Although many people wanted the service to resume, they were naturally anxious and a bit resistant to return to a “new normal”. Our befrienders played an important role in encouraging and supporting people to get out and about, when health and restrictions allowed, and also helping to identify any additional needs or ways to increase wellbeing. Through our Digital Connections project, we recruited and trained volunteer Digital Champions who supported people to develop digital skills and use technology to access not only befriending but also medical, financial, shopping and other services.

Demand for our services is on the increase, particularly as more people learn about them. However, with a significant shortfall in fundraising income, we've had to restructure how we work as an organisation, develop new service models, and pause some of our services. These were difficult decisions, but they have so far helped us to remain financially secure as we go forward and do our best to weather the current economic situation.

We recognise the importance of long-term sustainability and are constantly evolving and developing plans to diversify our funding streams and generate much needed income. Raising funds is always challenging, and we appreciate the generosity of our supporters and the commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers.

Achieving the No.1 Befriending Agency's aims is only possible because of the efforts of the many fantastic people we work with - volunteers, partners and supporters. This contribution is how we make a difference to the people we engage with in the local communities we work within. I would also like to thank, and pay tribute to, our amazing staff team. They have worked incredibly hard, having to adjust to the new ways of working and be creative, and have made some remarkable things happen.

We hope that you enjoy reading about our achievements over the past year and how our befriending services continue to make a real difference to the people we work with.

Sheila McPherson
Managing Director

Founding Director's Message

We asked Audrey Mutongi-Darko to reflect on this past year and to give an insight into future plans. Here's our interview:

What was your motivation in starting the No.1 Befriending Agency?

It was a combination of a personal experience of loneliness and recognition that there was a need for meaningful connections in society. I moved to the UK on my own from Zimbabwe in 2002. At that time, I recognised what it felt like to be lonely, which got me thinking about people who may not have the same level of mobility as I have, or people who have other major health challenges in life. At the time we started supporting people, I was starting my PhD and had been on a course which focused on "Business Beyond the Bottom Line". The course drew my attention to businesses that are not only about profit, but also about creating social change. I knew then that this is what I wanted to do with my life, create social change.

Why did you choose to launch a heritage project at No.1?

The heritage project is an opportunity for us to create real memories. At the heart of heritage is celebrating cultures, stories, memories and nature. Heritage is anything from the past that we wish to pass on to future generations.

So, why do this now? For the past 5 years, we have been creating meaningful connections in people's lives through intercultural and intergenerational connections. We recognise that everyone is an asset and has something to share. The heritage project allows us to capture those memories for generations to come, it's magical. Through the project, we will produce videos and books that create long-lasting stories that continue to impact long after our project is done.

One of the things that I recognise when researching for the project was that local museums and libraries did not have videos from all parts of the world. The heritage project that we are doing captures stories from people of all ages from different cultures around the world. We focus on common themes: every generation has a living space, every culture has music, and everyone has food no matter where you come from. The voices of people that live in Scotland should be represented in our museums and libraries. We are making that possible through a storytelling project that shares everyone's stories.

It's important to add that central to this project is simply having fun! Through heritage, our wellbeing is increased and more people have their voices heard and have access to heritage than they would have without the project. This project also reminds me that, despite our differences, we all connect in many ways.



Do you think there is a greater need for befriending today?

Yes I do. I think that the fabric of society is continuously changing, and we are not as tightly-knit as we used to be. We live in a very independent world as society is evolving. In recent times, we have had many constant changes with Brexit, the pandemic, leadership change, inflation - all this shifting creates uncertainty. With uncertainty and change can come disconnection and loneliness. On the other hand, what we get with befriending is an opportunity to increase our wellbeing. Everything that we are doing as an organisation is about creating wellbeing. As the world becomes more disconnected and prone to anxiety, we need more opportunities to connect. One-to-one and group befriending, particularly through storytelling, offers us a deep connection opportunity.

Tell us about the highlight of the past year?

There are two things: firstly, being able to grow the care team and make a financial impact as well as create social change, which in turn allows us to support more befriending activities in the future. This is a huge highlight for me, and has come with challenges that I've embraced because they give me an opportunity to continuously grow. Together as a team we continuously grow and develop, and, with that will come more impact and resilience.

The heritage is the second highlight for me. It is a dream come true. It is one thing to make social change at a point in time. It is another thing to capture that as memories that can impact generations to come. The project is creating a legacy for the organisation and the individuals participating in it. I am also excited about what heritage is doing to us as a team, it creates a synergy within our organisation: while creating connections we are also building confidence and heritage through storytelling.

What has care been excelling at this year?

Many things! We set ourselves some targets last year. One of our targets was to reach 1000 hours a week of client support; I hope we will be delivering that by the end of the year. It is such an achievement. Secondly, the care team has grown, there are now four members in the team. A year ago, it was just two full-time staff members. This has been very important because it is what we need to keep growing the organisation. The third thing that we have excelled in was our last care inspection report. In all four areas we scored good and very good: care and support, quality of staffing, and quality of management and leadership as well as in wellbeing. We have also developed our systems and have put in place digital care planning, which means that we can see in the office the notes that the staff are making when delivering care in real time. We can also give access to families to the online systems if they feel they need it. All these things lead to greater quality of care and social impact.

What are you looking forward to over the next few months?

As we've grown, I recognise that the care side and the befriending side of the organisation can sometimes be separate in our work. There are however skills and experience in both parts of the organisation that sit well together. We haven't had a lot of opportunities to work together on projects, and this is what I am looking forward to in the next year. We are looking forward to working in local community settings together, having more group events together, and potentially having a local focus for residential and group projects. In this setting, we can house people for care and, alongside that, have a hub where people can host events. This can merge the care and befriending skills and expertise to create a natural synergy. It would also offer the community more choice between care and befriending and the various other support touchpoints in between the two services that we are not currently tapping into.

About Us



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



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



Compassion, happiness, independence, respect, courage.

2022: In Numbers

Befriending

- 90** matches have been supported
- 68** individuals have attended online events
- 3,345** total hours of engagement including:
 - 1,123** hours of group befriending at virtual events
 - 352** hours of group befriending at in-person events
 - 1,870** hours of one-to-one befriending

Care Clients

- 7** 24-hour live-in care
- 3** Complex care
- 21** Half day care
- 5** Respite
- 2** Befriending Plus

115 Volunteers, including:

- 60** Telephone Befrienders
- 12** Creative Assistants
- 6** Peer Supporters
- 4** Digital Champions
- 8** Fundraising Assistants
- 2** Social Media Volunteers
- 1** Administrator
- 14** Digital Connection Volunteers
- 2** Heritage Ambassadors
- 2** Podcast Volunteers
- 2** Film Assistants
- 2** In-person Assistant Volunteers

Our Services

In Scotland, in 2020, 35% of adults felt lonely, some, most, almost all, or all of the time (in the previous 7 days), according to the Scottish Household Survey. This is compared with 21% in 2018.¹ Statistics like these clearly illustrate the need for ‘A Connected Scotland’, which is the Scottish Government’s national strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness.² When loneliness is said to be as dangerous to one’s health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, solutions need to be found.³

There is research evidence that befriending helps to alleviate loneliness and social isolation through meaningful and reciprocal friendship-like support and opportunities to engage in community and social activities. This impact is especially notable among groups of people who are at higher risk of isolation, including older adults, those with mental health problems or long-term health conditions, mothers with young children, carers and minority ethnic groups.⁴

This year we have continued to deliver on our vision of creating connections and building confidence in, and through, the people we work with. It’s not just about assisting people with their daily routines, it’s about supporting people to live the best lives they can and be as independent as possible. The No.1 Befriending Agency is all about human connection and building confidence. We know how vital this work is for the mental health and wellbeing of our participants. Our goals remain to grow the organisation, to reach more socially isolated people and to ensure our volunteers have the best experience possible.

Our one-to-one befriending has evolved over this year into a 12-week programme of support, with participants setting their goals and ambitions for their time with their befriender. Through building a relationship with a local volunteer, they work towards becoming more connected to their community. The 12 weeks of individual befriending is combined with a 12-month period of online group befriending, in person local group sessions and invitations to ‘special’ larger scale events - all facilitated by volunteers and supported by staff.

¹ Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey, Published 2020
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-household-survey-publications/>

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/connected-scotland-strategy-tackling-social-isolation-loneliness-building-stronger-social-connections/>

³ Age Scotland, Tackling Loneliness, Published 2015

⁴ A Summary of Recent Research Evidence About Loneliness and social isolation, their health effects and the potential role of befriending, Mary Roberts, 2014, Befriending Networks

A key component of our current befriending has been the integration of 'Every Life is A Story', our Heritage Lottery funded 12-month project which began in June 2022 (see pages 12-16). Our volunteer-led befriending service has always enabled our service users to reminisce and share their memories, but with the launch of the heritage project, we have expanded our service to encompass the formal capture of oral history. Working with Glasgow Life, The Village Storytelling Centre and the National Library of Scotland's Moving Image Archive, over the course of this year we are capturing untold stories as our befriendeds and volunteers share in their rich and diverse heritage.

In the following report, we explore our social impact through the prism of 4 outcomes:

1. Reducing loneliness
2. Increasing confidence
3. Increasing feelings of self-worth as a result, level of activity
4. Increased connections.

We believe that befriending changes two lives: the befriended's and the befriender's. For this reason, we include statistics from our volunteers as well. Without our fantastic team of dedicated volunteers, we would be unable to achieve any of this impact.

Thank you!



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' once before the befriending starts (our baseline) and again after 12 weeks.

Although there is a lot of subjectivity in measuring 'state of mind' we believe that if befriending cheers even one person up and helps them become more resilient throughout these difficult times, our job is done!

Clients

All statistics are compared with the baseline.

Loneliness

80% were less lonely based on the UCLA Loneliness Scale

Confidence

60% reported increased self-confidence¹

Skills

80% reported increased confidence in their ability to learn new skills

Connectivity

40% reported increased connections and social participation²

Other Statistics (based on our client survey):

92% look forward to and enjoy the weekly phone calls

85% said that having a volunteer makes them feel like they have something to contribute

77% felt having a volunteer improved their confidence in their abilities

69% felt that having a befriender made them feel more able to cope with things day-to-day

100% of those that had attended our in person events said they loved them

Volunteers

88% of volunteers say they would recommend volunteering here to their friends

85% said they look forward to their weekly phone calls

Based on people who said "agree" and "strongly agree":

82% said volunteering has helped them in their personal development

88% said volunteering has helped them gain a new skill (listening, language and cultural skills)

82% said volunteering has improved their general health and well-being

53% said volunteering has allowed them to meet people that they wouldn't have met otherwise

70% said they feel more connected to their community as a result of volunteering

¹ Based on the New General Self-Efficacy Scale, an 8-item measure that assesses how much people believe they can achieve their goals, despite difficulties.

² Based on the 'Social' domain of the WHO's Quality of Life for Older People measurement tool.

What Our Clients Say

"I love speaking to my befriender Kenny, he calls me every week and we have so much in common. It's made a real difference to my life" - **Frank**

"Thank you for helping me when I was in tough times" - **Azziz**

"I enjoy [the calls] an awful much. You have been a great help to me" - **Nora**

"I didn't want to chat to anyone, but I felt I could talk to [my befriender]" - **Elizabeth**

"I've never had a befriender before. I feel it's got really easy to tell him about something bothering me, it's a good feeling to be listened to and to be able to speak to someone, he does not make me feel like I'm talking too much" - **Annabelle**

"I find that having the assurance that I have connections and phone calls, events, in my pocket helps me to deal with any of the upsets or down days I might have" - **Anne**

"Sometimes I get lonely, I look forward to the phone calls and talking about things in general. I don't feel so lonely because I can talk to someone on the phone. It's a good thing for someone like myself who lives on their own to have somebody to talk to" - **June**

"You get into a rut sometimes, and it's nice to have somebody else's take on what's going on" - **Harold**

"At the No.1 Befriending Agency I feel valued" - **Anne**

"I don't know what I would have done without the No.1 Befriending Agency. It absolutely changed my life. Being able to get out of the house to the in-person events means so much and always gives me something to look forward to" - **Annabelle**

"I feel like I can speak to my befriender about anything and she always seems so interested in everything I say, which makes me feel comfortable and at ease. We always make time for each other." - **Maria**

"My befriender is like another son to me. We have a lot of things in common and the conversations fly by." - **Steve**



What Our Volunteers Say

"Befriending has been one of the best things I ever signed up to. I have been a befriender for a few years with the same befriender and have continuously enjoyed our calls ... Befriending has made me feel more involved in the local community with someone I would not have met in my every day life. I feel like I'm making a positive difference by helping someone with overcoming isolation and loneliness. I would definitely recommend Befriending to anyone who has a little time to spare" - Raisah

"It's been a rewarding experience getting to know some of the users at No.1 Befriending Agency. Hearing their thoughts and stories in response to the activities has been the highlight" - Shonagh, Volunteer Creative Assistant

"I think it's that the specific time we spend together is just devoted to chatting, not giving medication, cleaning or shopping for her. Our time together is about discussing what [my befriender] wants to talk about, getting to know her - she is fabulous. It is so good to share time with someone who sees life's quirks and disappointments and yet remains positive. Good to share a sense of humour" - Christine

"It has really made a significant difference, after the lockdown when people started meeting each other. The befriending events brought people together to rebuild a social life, share life experiences and sustain connections. I find myself part of a team facilitating to achieve these results among the participants of the events: waiting near the car park ushering someone to the venue, starting a conversation to ask whether they would need a cup of tea or coffee - of course, making sure that they have a refill time-to-time - just sitting next to them to further explain during an activity, or engaging in listening to their stories. I see that everyone involved in the work contributes to the same goals in multiple ways, as it requires a collective effort. I am glad that I have a role to play in creating a supportive environment and making positive changes in the lives of the people. These events, participants and the team make me feel useful and motivated" - Felician



Shonagh



Felician

The Heritage Project



Our heritage project “Every life is a story” has given us an amazing opportunity to let service users and volunteers explore their heritage through intercultural and intergenerational befriending. The project is based on the belief that everyone's story is worth sharing, promoting conversations and connections through our popular, free befriending services. This service is for anyone over the age of 18 who lives alone and allows them to take part in a variety of group befriending activities in their local community. Although the project covers all of Glasgow, we are focusing in particular on group befriending events in Govan, Castlemilk and Maryhill.

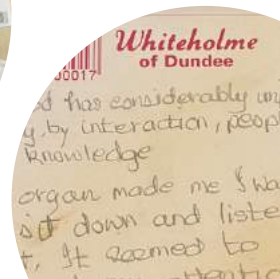
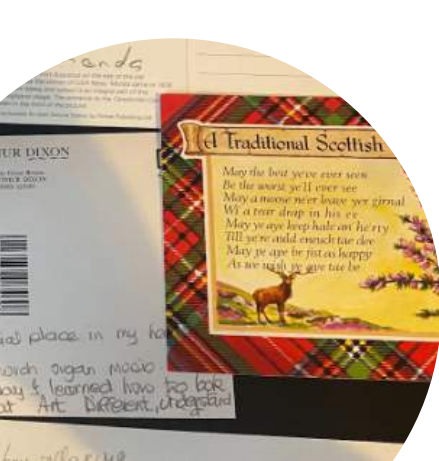
The key themes of the heritage project are food and drink, music, gardens, and living and sleeping spaces. We have been using these themes to shape our programme of events, both in-person and virtual sessions. Each month, we have been focusing on one of the themes and including heritage activities based around this during our sessions.

Outreach

In order to ensure the project is exactly what people want, extensive outreach and consultations have been done.

At the beginning of the project we sent out a questionnaire to service users, volunteers and partners to see what they wanted from the project. 47% of the participants said that they hadn't had the opportunity to explore their heritage before, but 90% said that they would love to take part in heritage based activities.

We also collect feedback from service users at the end of every event, mainly by writing their feedback on the back of a Scottish themed postcard. They also have been writing their stories on the postcards, which has allowed us to record their stories.



“Talking to other organisations and making connections with them has been a very rewarding experience. Working together with them I have learnt so much about so many amazing groups operating throughout Glasgow. There are so many individuals within organisations who care passionately about their communities and do all that they can to empower them. I love playing a part in helping bring people together.”

- Emma, Participation and Inclusion Outreach Worker



One of the key partnerships of the heritage project is with The Village Storytelling Centre who provide participants with the opportunity to share their stories through the magic of storytelling.

Starting the sessions with our key themes, participants are able to explore their heritage while building connections with others.

The sessions that have taken place have been in Barlanark and Castlemilk with more sessions planned in Govan and Maryhill. All participants have enjoyed listening to the stories as well as getting involved in the art activities facilitated by Centre.



Moving Image Archive

The Moving Images Archive is a crucial part of our project. The wonderful team at the Archive has trained staff and volunteers on how to use the Archive to help service users reminisce. Volunteers learned about the different tools at the Archive including the large online archive full of heritage themed films.





GlasgowLife

Glasgow Life has been another key partner during this project. Volunteers and service users have been able to reflect on their heritage through visiting places of historical interest in Glasgow. We were grateful to have a tour of Kelvingrove, looking in particular at art related to music. We learnt how music is conveyed through the medium of art. The feedback from the service users was very positive:



“This trip has definitely made me feel more confident to going to trips in the future”

“Today I learned how to look at art differently, how to understand it”

“The tour guides and the No.1 befrienders were 1st class.Very caring to make sure we had a lovely tour”

“I just loved the day, everything was lovely”

“My mood has considerably improved today, by interaction, people and knowledge”



Local Visits

Since the beginning of the project we have had a variety of in-person events where participants have had the opportunity to explore the key themes of the project. For the garden theme we had a tour of the Hidden Gardens where the participants got to learn about the different types of plants the gardens were growing and how they use the produce.

All the participants who came to the Hidden Gardens were local to the area, which meant it was very easy for them to get there. Despite this, they had never visited before and loved discovering what was on their doorstep. On top of that, they all felt that they would love to come back as it is so accessible for them. One volunteer even planned to come back for a day out with his family.

Volunteers

A crucial part of this project is giving volunteers the chance to develop their skills, so many specific roles were created for the project. Heritage ambassadors are volunteers who lead in-person or virtual activities with a focus on the heritage themes. Group befriending is the main focus of this project, so in-person event assistants are needed on a weekly basis. These volunteers help to set up and facilitate events, while also making sure service users feel comfortable throughout the session.

We have podcast and film assistant roles which allow us to record oral history stories of our service users. Our team of volunteers are essential in helping us collect and preserve these stories, either in group or individual sessions.

Our volunteers come from all over Glasgow, some have signed up through outreach as well as from the Scottish Refugee Council.



Elderpark Project

The Elderpark Housing project continues to develop as we look to reduce isolation and loneliness for local people within the G51/G52 postal area. We have worked with 31 individuals over the period. Hannah, our Volunteer Coordinator, is now based on-site each week, which enables people to drop by and find out more about the service and even get help connecting to one of the virtual events, should they wish.

Volunteer befrienders have been playing their part in furthering individual's IT capabilities. One of our befriending volunteers, Annabel, enabled Emma, her befriending match, to set up her fire stick over the phone and to upload her photos to play on her TV screen. Emma is in awe of her technological achievements - she regularly updates the online group with her latest challenges!

Visits have been made to Govan Stones and Fairfield Shipyard and have proved extremely popular. Regular Cups of Friendship have been held in the warm and friendly atmosphere of the Mary Barbour Suite. A variety of organisations refer individuals to us, and we have been actively developing new relationships with other organisations in the Govan area. Exciting things lie ahead as we've submitted joint funding applications for a digital lending library and a large scale celebration event is planned for March 2023.

Hannah, Volunteer Coordinator

"This year has come with the challenge of building people's confidence to take that step out of their door to attend in-person events. We have seen a slow but positive growth in the number of service users attending our in-person events, which has been great. Many of our service users started off attending our virtual events and, building friendships over Zoom, found the courage to attend our in-person events, which has strengthened those friendships and connections. It has been fantastic to see our service users coming together both virtually and in-person and seeing how well our volunteers interact with each one of them."



Rachel, Befriendee

"We talk about the world, what's happening in different places, everyday things and about our past life. Without Kate, I would not have a space to talk about things with no judgment or expectation. I love the calls, she is lovely to speak to and is a good person to talk to when I do not want to talk to family..... I feel more relaxed after our call and look at life on a more positive note after the call each week"

Kate, Rachel's Befriender

"I do think Rachel benefits from the time we spend together as it is giving her routine and something to keep her occupied, especially when there was so little going on when we started. It is giving her someone to talk to that is not her family. She always ends the call saying how much she appreciates getting called. I see the benefit the most in that she has started going back to groups after Covid whenever she is feeling confident to go out."

Hannah, Volunteer Coordinator

"From the start of the match it was clear to see how much of a positive impact it was having on Rachel, being able to speak to someone out with her family and help encourage her to get out the house when she can. The encouragement and conversations from Kate has helped Rachel build her confidence to attend groups and events as well as having a more positive outlook."

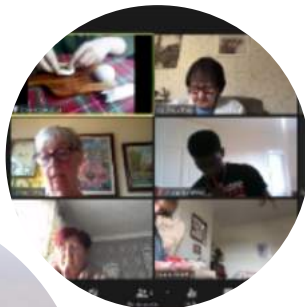


Virtual Events

Although restrictions have eased over the past 12 months, we have continued to hold our popular virtual events three times each week. Virtual events at The No.1 Befriending Agency are vibrant gatherings where those who are housebound, regular attendees to in-person Cup-of-Friendships, staff and our wonderful volunteers, all come together to enjoy a cup of tea, a chat and an activity. Over the year 2021 to 2022, we have enjoyed a variety of activities led by volunteers. From weekly 'armchair exercises' to quizzes, debates, and history talks, there has been something for everyone to experience.

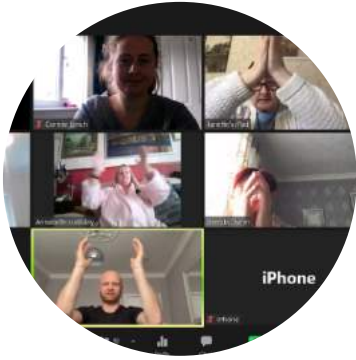
From November 2021 - February 2022, funding from the Peoples Postcode Lottery Trust allowed us to continue to develop our group befriending events online. Our attendees grew to know each other over the 12-week period and shared personal stories, picked each other up when down, and there were requests to share contact details - friendships have been made over Zoom! One attendee commented: "just a bit nervous of the chat rooms as quite new to this, and had not revised for the quiz! But overall it was just absolutely delightfully excellent".

A real highlight of the project happened in January, when we worked with Clyde College's music department to deliver a live show with student volunteer performances. At the session, the students played music specifically curated for our event in ensemble groups, talked to our attendees about their motivations and aspirations, and answered any questions. This has been a wonderful experience for both our clients and the students who are getting an opportunity to perform and connect with an audience. 29 students engaged with us in February, each donating an hour of their time. A total uplifting hit!



Heritage

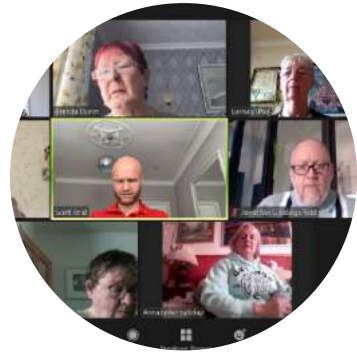
With the launch of our Heritage Project in June 2022, we have woven heritage into virtual events too. Service users have enjoyed reminiscing quizzes, heritage art classes, and discussion sessions. Our virtual events have contributed to the aims of the Heritage Project: to encourage volunteers and service users to share and explore their heritage, and to show that every life is a story worth exploring.



Burns Night Taster Session

The Burns night event was a great start to the year, giving service users and volunteers the opportunity to come together at a taster event. The session gave everyone the chance to see the different activities we offer during the virtual events, including breakout rooms and a quiz. As well as this, students from the Royal Conservatoire kindly came along and performed throughout the session, which all attendees enjoyed. One even commented afterwards: “To be honest, I enjoyed it all and I must admit, I shed a few tears”. Another participant commented on “the warmth in the room felt even on Zoom”.

For many volunteers, it was the first virtual event they attended and one commented: “It was lovely to meet so many people and take part in the quiz. The live singing was amazing too!”



“I just thought you did so wonderfully well, in choice of speakers and singers. It is very much appreciated just how much trouble you must have gone to prepare and present such a lovely performance. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and in addition, thought that the guests were very professionally friendly and nice, too. Thanks again for a lovely surprising moment or two during the evening.” - Maria



Wellbeing

From March 2022 our virtual events have been supported by The Glasgow Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. This funding enables us to deliver our online group befriending, which is focused on the wellbeing of participants. Our regular feedback sessions allow us to monitor our impact and a consistent theme is that, no matter the content of each event, the favourite part of virtual events is chatting and getting to know each other - which is so important in building connections and creating community.

"I find the virtual events very enjoyable, and it especially helped my confidence during the pandemic. Sitting listening to people and the interaction between everyone is so lovely, and it is so nice to see the same and new faces every week" - **Catherine H**

"I enjoy them, I like them all, I like speaking to all the people that are on, and all the company" - **JJ**

"I have reduced mobility and as much as I would love to, I couldn't manage a walking group or a trip to the park" - **SU**

"No.1 Befriending has made a real big difference in my life, it has brought people into my living room, and it has just been amazing through lockdown - which was absolutely terrible as everyone knows . I think No.1 Befriending saved me, that's all I can say. I just love the meetings and everything" - **Annabelle**

"I tend to do some workouts or mediations sessions, I really enjoy interacting with the befriendees, it is just a nice warm feeling from doing it, and also, when I can, sitting in on the whole session, I enjoy the interaction with everyone" - **Scott, Volunteer**

"I'm so glad I zoomed in this afternoon. What a joy Tom Hubbard is. I've so much to do with the house and didn't trust myself to put things on hold for an hour then be able to get back into the work. I'm so glad I did. If we were to see him in the concert hall, I probably couldn't afford to. I'm so grateful to No.1 B., and to the people who give their time and their talent to us. That's priceless." - **SU**



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1 Cadogan St, Glasgow G2 7HF

What's on September

<p>1st Wednesday Weekly social 11am - 12pm Fitness session and reminiscence</p> <p>3rd Friday Cup of Friendship 3pm - 4pm BINGO!</p> <p>6th Monday Monday social 2pm -3pm Two truths and a lie social game.</p> <p>8th Wednesday Weekly social 11am - 12pm Fitness session and category game</p> <p>10th Friday Cup of Friendship 3pm - 4pm Incredible trivia quiz game</p> <p>13th Monday Monday social 2pm -3pm with Catherine Mackie</p> <p>15th Wednesday Weekly social 11am - 12pm Desert Island disks</p>	<p>17th Friday Cup of Friendship 3pm - 4pm BINGO!</p> <p>20th Monday Monday social 2pm -3pm Govan stones tour</p> <p>22nd Wednesday Weekly social 11am - 12pm Fitness session and art with Debbie</p> <p>24th Friday Cup of Friendship 3pm - 4pm with Catherine Mackie</p> <p>27th Monday Monday social 2pm -3pm Mexican Culture with Dani</p> <p>29th Wednesday Weekly social 11am - 12pm Fitness session and art with Debbie</p>
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September

All events are via zoom please email or call for more info
Email: info@befriend.org.uk / Tel: 0141 465 6998

Digital Connections Project

The Digital Connections Project ran from September 2021 to August 2022 with funding from the Digital Participation Charter 8 Fund. It welcomed 19 volunteers from vulnerable groups to build their individual skills and increase their confidence. We worked together to create skills-based goals to access opportunities (e.g. employment) in the future - all while the participants donated their time to improve the wellbeing and happiness of others.

The project delivered a wide range of activities from hosting and supporting online group digital events, delivering digital training workshops, one-to-one digital support, one-to-one telephone befriending, focus groups, peer support and buddy roles.

“Throughout these four months I’ve learned some skills that I never believed I’d achieve and made good bonds with other people, learned new Zoom skills, and I am looking forward to doing more workshops in the future” - Nadia, Participant

Restrictions and their impact on individuals' mental health were a challenge. In response to this, several participants worked with Jennifer, the Volunteer Coordinator to create an 'Organic Digital Wellbeing Database, including Poverty Reduction and Skills Development'. This digital resource was shared with all participants and included links and information on support that was available. This valuable resource extends well beyond the life of the project.



Jennifer Scott, Digital Participation Project

“There was a fantastic celebration event at the conclusion of the project in June. There were 7 volunteer-led workshop tables such as a Mobile Photo Editing Table, IT help desk, Summer Art Table, Discussion and Debate Table, Photo Slide Table, Photo booth and a DJ Booth! All the workshop tables were led by our volunteers, and our service users could go and interact at the tables at their leisure. This was an amazing opportunity to come together and share different skills and knowledge in person”.



Winter Wellbeing

The Winter Social Wellbeing Fund gave us the opportunity to create 25 one-to-one befriending matches from December to March.

Service users were asked to set goals which they hoped to achieve through their 12-week match. This included building confidence, having someone to talk to, and getting out the house. Volunteers were told what the goals were and were encouraged to help their service users to achieve them. After six weeks, we checked in with service users and volunteers to see if they had or were on their way to achieving their goals. The volunteers found it very helpful to know the service users' goals as it gave them an insight into what the service users were looking for through 1-2-1 befriending.

The winter wellbeing fund played a crucial role in the evolution of the befriending service, as it was the first time that we had supported matches for a 12-week period where there was a set goal. This experience has helped our service to evolve.

The return of our first in-person event was also done as part of winter wellbeing. For some, it was the first time that they had attended an event since the pandemic, and they all thoroughly enjoyed it. We met at the Tron in the city centre, where service users were able to share their stories over a cup of tea and scone.

Service users were also encouraged to join our virtual events so that they could get involved in our group befriending sessions on Zoom. We held a fabulous taster event on Burns Night for service users at the beginning of 2021 (see page 19) where they could come along to find out more about our virtual events. There was live singing, a quiz and even some karaoke!



Maria, Befriender

"I feel like as far as the befriending goes, it's been very helpful as these have been difficult times... At first, I thought the age difference might be a problem, but it's refreshing... She puts me at ease. She is very encouraging too. She is good for my health. I feel like I can speak to her about anything, and she always seems so interested in everything I say, which makes me feel comfortable and at ease. We always make time for each other."

Caitlin, Maria's Befriender

"Volunteering within No.1 befriending has been one of the most life-changing experiences I've ever had. I've volunteered for a year now as a telephone befriender. I feel there's no better and more rewarding feeling than playing a little part in making someone's day a bit brighter by giving them a ring for a blether, and lending a listening ear to someone who needs it most."

You can genuinely make a friend for life by taking part, so I recommend anyone to please volunteer. It's also amazing to hear your befriender's process and how much their confidence improves just by giving them a wee call. It's very heartwarming."



Connie, Project Coordinator

"It has been so rewarding to see this match develop over the past year. When speaking with Maria, she always focused on how Caitlin was very understanding and very empathetic. Although initially Maria had reservations about Caitlin's age, she finds her comforting and wise beyond her years, and she always comments that it's lovely having someone to speak to who is always engaged and committed to the conversation."



Wellbeing Fund

From March this year, many one-to-one befriending and in person events have been supported by The Glasgow Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. With a focus on wellbeing, these one-to-one relationships give space for individuals to express themselves and to be heard.



During the Glasgow Open Doors week we went to the Govanhill Baths to find out about the history of this amazing building. We enjoyed learning about the Baths and how the team at Govanhill are preserving their heritage. After the tour, we enjoyed alfresco refreshments whilst everyone reminisced about swimming and growing up in the area.

Helen L., Befriender

“As time has gone on I can speak to [her], I look forward to her phoning and if I’ve got something on my mind I’ll always speak to her about it, it’s been a real progress. I love my weekly conversations as it is nice to hear someone’s voice and to have a little chat. Since I have joined the No.1 Befriending Agency, I now always have something to look forward to. They are very good at contacting me, asking for updates on my life and always make sure I am invited to any upcoming events which always makes me feel included.”

Ivy, Helen’s Befriender

“Yeah, I think she benefits from the time we spend together. I think she needs someone to be on the phone. If I did not call, she would want me to. We have a friendship, we talk about what we do, and I am someone to talk to. She is happier because she tells me what she does, we share a lot, so it gives a lot of benefits. She had been feeling lonely.”

Catherine, Volunteer Coordinator

“Ivy and Helen have built a befriending match based on mutual trust and a genuine interest in each other as people. Helen has expressed how much Ivy’s calls improve her confidence, ensure she feels listened to, and give her something to look forward to.

It is clear when speaking to Ivy, too, that their calls are an enjoyable and valuable experience. As we return to in-person events, I know both Ivy and Helen hope to attend and meet in person. Having coordinated their match since I began at No.1, I share this hope for them too.”



Volunteer Stories

Joe

“The support I had from No1 was excellent - we had conversations around boundaries, what the befriending was for...I appreciated the support and spent a long time with the coordinator on the phone and emailing with my peer supporter.

The high points for me were towards the end, every week my befriender would reflect on how much she enjoyed the conversation. Looking up at the time and seeing it had been an hour, we always had the conversation and enjoyed it. Week by week she looked forward to the conversations, enjoyed the fact that the time seemed to go quickly for both of us, to the point where I had to have a timer on my phone as I had things to do at 6!

Also there were some problems and some complaints with her care and the care company she had, and I was able to filter that back to the VC and the referrer, and they got resolved. She didn't know who to tell. When I went back to work, the befriending role had helped me to keep my skills: validating people's experience and creating space. The support helped me to know to ask for support in my job now. I absolutely would recommend befriending to others - a really positive experience for both parties.”





Debbie

“I have been volunteering at the No.1 Befriending Agency for over a year and a half, and I've led a number of creative activities and online events. The service users are elderly people of varied abilities, and I have assisted them by providing clear step-by-step instructions, both written and visual, and by checking understanding on a regular basis to ensure no one was left behind.”

During my volunteer experience, I trained myself to be trustworthy and altered my effective presentations in response to service user preferences by integrating information on learning that they were interested in and creative activities that they could complete on their own time. In my session, I used a mixed media approach to activities, using a number of different art techniques, so as many people as possible could take part and succeed, regardless of any barriers they faced. Through my creativity and investigation, I have gained knowledge that is simple for me to teach while making a significant difference in the lives of those I educate.

My commitment to others improves my community, since I have been given so much in life and believe it is important to give back. Finally, it has given me confidence, and it continuously teaches me something new. I would like to thank everyone at the No. 1 for their assistance throughout this incredible opportunity. It has been a wonderful connection, and I feel I can take meaningful action.”

Tasneem

“As a digital champion, I attended an in-person one-day event where I spoke to a few individuals about how to access the internet. I enjoyed connecting with people face-to-face, which we haven't been able to do for so long since the pandemic began. I am about to start working one-to-one with a service user, and I'm really looking forward to it. It makes me feel useful to be able to help others with my skills and experience. Although sometimes we have to muddle along and learn and chat and laugh together to get to a solution! There is a wonderful feeling in that too.”

Our Volunteers

Between January and September this year, 57 volunteers have undertaken our Volunteer Training and have joined the organisation in a variety of roles from telephone befrienders to in-person events assistants and fundraising assistants. The heritage project has allowed us to diversify our volunteer roles further, with film assistants and podcasters to name but two new roles.

Training has predominantly taken place over Zoom as it has been the preferred option of new volunteers:



"I thoroughly enjoyed the training & thought it gave such a brilliant first impression of you guys as a charity. It was personal, supportive & a really positive feel, which is actually tricky to achieve on Zoom too! So a huge thank you"

- Amy, a recent training attendee

We've also hosted a number of Volunteer Socials following feedback from our new volunteers. The event we held in June was a fun affair with everyone playing a version of human bingo, each trying to find someone who 'could juggle', 'was born in December' or 'is a twin' the fastest. For the record - nobody was born in December! These occasions are very special for us, as it's an opportunity to thank our volunteers for all that they do in person.



After reading what our volunteers think on page 12, our volunteer stories on page 28 and the numerous case studies throughout the report, if you feel inspired to join us please get in touch to find out more by emailing info@befriend.org.uk or calling [0141465 6998](tel:01414656998). We'd love to hear from you! And remember, you can follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Student Placements

We have worked with Strathclyde University over this period and in the last academic year we supported 3 students to carry out placements with ourselves, Allana, Imaan and Helen with Annabel joining us this September. It's fantastic to offer support to those looking to explore or pursue a career in this field.



Helen

"In January 2022, I did an 8-week work placement with No.1 Befriending as part of my university degree. During my time with No.1, I was able to take part in the weekly befriending meetings. These meetings were filled with conversation and laughter, and I was able to understand how important these meetings were to the befriendees. I felt very supported by the staff at No.1 Befriending during my placement, and it increased my confidence. The skills I learned during my time at No.1 enabled me to get a job soon after graduating."

Annabel

"I am currently on a student placement here at the No.1 Befriending Agency. At the start of my time here I was very nervous and did not know what to expect, but everyone has been so welcoming to me and I now look forward to my days at the office. I have been involved in phoning the service users and asking about their experience and time here at the befriending agency. This has been amazing. It has been so lovely to hear everyone's stories about how much being a part of the No.1 Befriending Agency has changed their lives and given them something to look forward to.



I have also had the opportunity to attend some in-person events. I've loved getting involved in and hearing the discussions that everyone has at these events, and you can tell just how much everyone enjoys them. It is incredibly rewarding having the opportunity to work for an organisation that impacts so many lives for the better."

Care

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 experiences.

We are on the Scotland Excel framework, and we deliver bespoke care services in local authorities across Scotland. Our services promote independence, wellbeing and social inclusion. Profit from these paid-for services is reinvested into the organisation to create positive social change through befriending. Our mission is to reduce loneliness and isolation. We provide compassionate social support, promote inclusion and re-orientation.

Our care services are divided into the following categories:

- 24 Hour Live-In Care - Supporting a service user to retain a greater level of independence in their own home.
- Overnight Care - Providing the service user with peace of mind should they require support during the night
- Specialized care - Any complex care requirements such as PEG feeding, stoma care, catheter care and special conditions which require special training.
- Half day care - This can include shopping, indoor or outdoor activities, companionship, housekeeping, personal care and medication administration.
- Respite Care - Replacement care for carers who are on holiday or need some time off
- Befriending Plus - A companionship service that does not include personal care.

These are the words from our service users:

“They treat me like a human being and respect my lifestyle at Isle of Tiree, and choices”.

“They ensure my sister is safe at all times, and she receives the best care possible”.

“They are very approachable and responsive to my changing care needs”.

“They know how to support my dad and assist him to get up and ready to enjoy going to his outdoor activity at the stadium every week”.

Care Inspectorate Report

Our last inspection was in August 2021. Below are some key inspection findings:
(1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent)

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	5 - Very Good
People experience compassion, dignity, and respect	5 - Very Good
People get the most out of life	5 - Very Good
People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	4 - Good
Infection prevention and control practices are safe for people experiencing care and staff	5 - Very Good
Leadership and staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of people experiencing care	4 - Good



Edson Atamba, Carer

What do you enjoy about your job role?

"The service users I support are friendly, and they help me get involved in their lives. In the few shifts I have been a part of, there has been positivity which gives me a boost."

What does your job role entail?

"My job role mostly deals with companionship, supporting the service user in their mobility and also helping with the cleaning of the house."

What are the challenges of the role?

"As of yet, I have not faced anything I perceive to be a challenge."



Deziree Onuawuchi, Carer

What do you enjoy about your job role?

"When clients see me, they are happy. And of course it may sound weird to say this but they become more independent because they are so happy that they want to do things for themselves and they get more active. So I like making someone's day better."

What does your job role entail?

"Some clients require personal care and medication. Some require companionship. There are some that suffer from depression, and it is my duty to check that they are okay. Some require that I help to cook and clean for them, too."

What are the challenges of the role?

"There are challenges that come naturally because the service user is not very mobile or is visually impaired, so you have to help them navigate or be creative with communication."

Ganiyat Amiru, Support Worker

What does your job role entail?

"My role as a support worker is to support my clients to have access to general care. I also keep my client company, give a listening ear and make sure they are happy at all times."

What would the impact be if you did not provide this service?

"If my client was not getting this support, she would be unable to leave the house because she's wheelchair bound and would struggle to go out on her own because of her mobility issues, which could lead to her being depressed."



Silvia Onojame, Care/Support Worker

What does your job role entail?

"My responsibility is to give caring and passionate person-centred care, with respect and effective communication skills.

My main duties are to assist my client in day to day requirements. This is providing personal care, preparing meals, medication, and ensuring their general well-being by promoting independence by moving around and exercising."

What are the challenges of the role?

"The challenges one can face may vary in day-to-day services when giving support, depending on individual clients:

In Alzheimer's patient, can be a change of mood, getting agitated when given personal care showering or getting dressed up, refusing to eat their food or take medication, getting up from bed, going out of the house, going back to bed at night sleep, staying up to play games with colleagues, brushing teeth... there can be so many challenging tasks when rendering services."

Fiona Mackinnon, Care Receiver

What do you enjoy about the service you receive from the No1 Care agency?

"I enjoy being treated like a human being and I am not stressed like the previous company."

What would the impact be if you did not have this service provided?

"I would be put in a care home, which has happened before and has impacted my life, particularly when I have dystonia attack."

If you were to recommend the No1 Care agency, what would be your highlight?

"They are willing to help me with my lifestyle and not change it. They are willing to work in a rural setting where I live (Isle of Tiree)"



Fundraising Activities

The No.1 Befriending Agency's long term strategy for fundraising sets out to increase and grow income generation to become sustainable as an organisation. The long term aim for the organisation is for the social enterprise arm (The No.1 Care Agency) to be able to generate the income required to support the volunteering activity of The No.1 Befriending Agency. To do this, we aim to increase the number of care clients year-on-year and develop the structure of the social enterprise to ensure the sustainability of the organisation.

Currently we have a small team with limited capacity to develop fundraising activities and therefore we rely on digital campaigns and staff, volunteers and clients to spread the word and encourage donations to our cause.

Go The Distance

We were delighted when volunteers asked to sign up again for our Go the Distance Challenge. The inaugural challenge took place in 2021 when participants were sponsored to travel 62 miles in the month of July by whatever means took their fancy: walking, running, hiking, paddleboarding... and we reached as far afield as Thailand!

Why 62 miles, you ask? Well across Scotland, 100,000 older people report feeling lonely almost all the time. If 100,000 people are converted into 100,000 metres, that is the equivalent of 62 miles. The Class of 2022 saw 12 participants embrace the challenge head on, and we were delighted to receive £560 in sponsorship. Thank you all!



Digital Campaigns

2022 was our second year of running a fundraising campaign through Crowdfunder, in partnership with the Aviva Community Fund. We also appear on Shop & Give, where a small donation is made to the organisation each time you shop at online retailers, and tickets can also be purchased for the Giving Lottery, both powered by The Giving Machine.

Make a Donation

We are appealing to YOU to join in supporting us to continue our vital work with a donation. To make an online donation, use the link or QR code below:



[DONATE TO THE NO1 BEFRIENDING AGENCY](#)

If you'd prefer to make a donation by cheque, please get in touch via info@befriend.org.uk or call us on [0141 465 6998](tel:01414656998).

Thank you!

Social Enterprise Award

In November 2021, we won the 'Prove it: Social Impact Award', at the Social Enterprise Awards Scotland 2021. The awards recognise social enterprises, charities and community organisations that deliver social and environmental impact in Scotland.

As winners of the Award, we progressed to the UK Social Enterprise Award! Audrey attended the ceremony in The Guildhall in London in mid-December. We didn't go any further, but reaching the UK finals was a fantastic achievement! As part of our prize a short video was commissioned about our work, it can be viewed [on YouTube](#). In the film, Janette, Karen and Catherine, a volunteer, speak about what befriending means to them. They spoke for over 2 hours during filming, but the film captures it all in under 2 minutes! Enjoy!



Scotland's Champions Awards

On Sunday 9 October the management team were thrilled to attend Scotland's Champions Awards at the Hilton in Glasgow. The awards recognise and celebrate the exceptional achievements of Scotland's people.

Founding Director Audrey had been nominated in the Caring Champion category. Audrey made it down to the final three! Congratulations! Well done to Audrey, and we hope you enjoyed the evening's dessert of Irn Bru baked Alaska with Buckfast jelly!



Chair's Letter

The No.1 Befriending Agency is a vibrant and dynamic organisation that provides services to socially isolated people via telephone, face to face visits, Group "Cup of Friendship" and online events. Our goals are to grow the organisation, reach more socially isolated people and ensure our volunteers have the best experience possible.



2021 marked a key milestone for the organisation - the 5th anniversary. During the year we have had a number of changes - the Chair stepped down, and I took on the role of Interim Chair in June; some funded projects came to an end; and we were granted funding for new projects that resulted in some staff members changing roles and others moving on, and some new staff came on board.

Our values criteria has focused our efforts not only on maintaining services, but also on rolling out a new model for befriending services that holistically developed during the pandemic. This new model enables us to reach and offer the services to more people, empowering them to make their own strong connections. The impacts of COVID have affected the design of the project through a continuation of our online group befriending service, which operated 3 times a week throughout the pandemic. Maintaining the online connections whilst enhancing the offering with in-person events ensures we are flexible and able to offer support and connections regardless of individual circumstances (e.g. lack of physical mobility).

The impact of the pandemic on the volunteering landscape has been extraordinary. There have been significant shifts in how people are volunteering, what they are doing, and who is getting involved. This created opportunities for us to design new volunteering opportunities and recruit a diverse group of volunteers, some who might never have volunteered previously.

Through working with stakeholders via outreach, consultations, surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups, both older and younger people have told us that learning new skills and gaining confidence helps them take advantage of opportunities that promote access to support and advice, and it also improves their economic position through education and chances for employment.

Against the backdrop of the pandemic, I am very proud of the incredible work that the No.1 team have continued to deliver, and the recognition received, such as The Social Impact Award.

We have reduced our cost base, and are optimistic about many income generating activities returning in 2022/23. However, like many organisations in the voluntary sector, The No.1 Agency is going to feel the impact of the pandemic over more than one financial year. In many ways, the pandemic has brought about a “new normal,” and that extends to The No.1 Agency’s fundraising efforts. As we look ahead, we encourage you to support the organisation via a donation or sponsorship that will help provide our much needed befriending services.

Currently, we are recruiting new board members, the aim being to strengthen the leadership in place and having board members actively involved in skill and expertise-based projects. We are looking for volunteers from a range of backgrounds and skill sets (e.g. finance, PR and Marketing, income generation via goods and services, a background in care, health and wellbeing). We welcome board members from across the country as meetings are currently online, however, face to face meetings will be held at our Glasgow city centre office 4 times a year.

Our board members help us ensure we have the capacity and skills to oversee our work. Key elements of the role include being an active advocate and ambassador for the organisation, and being fully engaged in securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for The No.1 Befriending Agency to advance its aims.

We are looking for people who have compassion and empathy for people who use our services. For more information, visit the [vacancies page](#) on our website.

Marlene Boyd Chair



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