



The No. 1
Be-friending
Agency

Supporting people to live fuller, happier lives

Impact Report

2016-2018



Contents

Looking back	Page 2
Why our work is needed	Page 4
Who we support	Page 7
What we do, including:	Page 8
One-to-one befriending	Page 8
Cup of Friendship events	Page 9
Social impact statistics	Page 11
Case stories	Page 12
Case studies from befriendees	Page 12
Volunteer case studies/ testimonies	Page 16
Accounts/funders	Page 20
Looking forward	Page 21
Message from the Chair	Page 22

Looking back

Now more than ever looking for solutions to loneliness is imperative, especially for organisations that seek to create social change. The No.1 Befriending Agency exists to support people experiencing loneliness or isolation, we focus on creating connections and building confidence in and through the people we work with. In the last two years since The No.1 Befriending Agency's inception, we have progressed from having a handful of volunteers, and the occasional hosting of events, to an organisation that is as young as it is dynamic, supporting over 150 older adults referred to us through other community groups. With a vibrant gathering of volunteers and staff, The No.1 Befriending Agency has contributed over 1500hrs of one to one befriending to people who would otherwise have been lonely or isolated.

As a volunteer myself, I have experienced first-hand the benefits that volunteering brings. Having moved countries solo in my early twenties, I have also faced loneliness and social isolation. My experience is that the wisdom and wider perspective I receive from befriending simply cannot be taught or educated, it must be experienced.



In one-to-one befriending friendships are formed, in some instances creating long lasting inter-generational bonds and forging through the barriers that age, culture and experiences create.

In the two years we have been in operation The No.1 Befriending Agency have had some notable triumphs; I believe we are enhancing society's capacity to act through volunteering. The work we do would not be possible without volunteers. We have received over 151 applicants for volunteer positions most of those volunteers have been trained. In 2017 we received the Volunteer Friendly Award and all in all have contributed over 1500 number of hours in one-to-one befriending to lonely older adults in Glasgow.

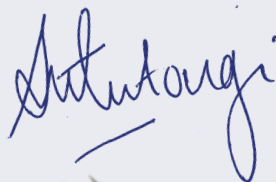
Over the last year, The No.1 Befriending Agency has seen substantial growth changes in our presence, income and service delivery. Our profile has risen, this is a testament to the great support received from our network of community organisation and funders.

We are also proud to be able to provide both one to one support as well as a more bespoke personal

support service for those that need care.

Alongside these successes, there is the challenge of an ever-increasing ageing society and the growing need for our service to reach ever more communities across Scotland and the UK.

We are committed to taking on that challenge with an aspiration to grow, learn and take on continuous evaluation. We aspire to truly be, the number one Befriending Agency.



Audrey Mutongi
Founding Director,
The No.1 **Be-friending** Agency



Why our work is needed

The No.1 Be-friending Agency is a social enterprise that began its work in September 2016. The organisation, registered as a Community Interest Company was formed by experienced care professionals who recognised that older adults in receipt of care often longed for some meaningful interactions in addition to the simple sometimes mechanical acts of the care. A comment that was frequently heard was “I would much rather someone sit down and talk to me than just come in to make me lunch”. Older adults who received care visits were often pleasantly surprised when support staff managed to sit down with them for a good conversation.

Unfortunately, older people are especially vulnerable to feeling lonely as often they have a very limited number of social

interaction in a week, mostly due to mobility issues or the loss of a spouse.

Loneliness can make people lose their confidence on top of their independence and can make them feel like they are invisible. There is a reason why loneliness is called “the silent epidemic”: it also causes a serious health risk. So much so, that according to Age UK, loneliness can be just as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.



The No.1 Be-friending Agency's mission is to reduce loneliness and isolation by promoting the wellbeing of people in Greater Glasgow and providing friendship and companionship.

In short, to support people to live fuller, happier lives.





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

The No.1 Be-friending Agency derives its name from The No.1 Ladies' detective Agency by the famous Scottish author Alexander McCall Smith. In those books two ladies navigate complex crimes by good humour and chatting over a cup of tea. This is also pretty much what we do: trying to solve the complex problem of loneliness and isolation over a cup of tea!

Our befriending service offers users an hour of conversation a week as well as an invitation to a Cup of Friendship events where they can meet with other people. These services are free of charge to the user.

Our values are:



Compassion

We value the individual and their needs



Courage

We recognise that it takes courage to fight loneliness and isolation



Happiness

We promote well-being and a sense of deep satisfaction for our staff members, befriendees and clients



Respect

We believe everybody is valuable and can make meaningful contribution to the world, therefore deserves respect



Independence – We promote freedom to live life in fullness



Referrers Feedback

Emails from social workers and community groups expressing appreciation for the befriending service The No.1 Be-friending agency offers:

“ Many thanks for getting back to me re Mary and John {users of the service}. I’ve had an update from Peter re John and I’m delighted that both he and Elizabeth are getting volunteer befrienders. It will make such a difference in their lives. ”

Kind regards, Mandy, *Area Coordinator*

“ Thank you so much for providing this befriending service. It is so needed. We have been desperate for befriending for our clients since our project started in August 2015, so happy to finally have found a service for the people we work with. ”

Thank you, Katherine, *Community Connector Practitioner*

“ Thanks for keeping us in the loop regarding our clients, we really appreciate it. And can I take this opportunity to say a hug thanks to everyone at your service, it is making such a difference to our clients, and is a much needed service. ”

Thanks Katherine, *Community Connector Practitioner*

“ I met I. (the client we referred to your Agency) over the weekend and she lit up when she spoke about J. her befriender. It’s a fabulous match - two real characters. Please could you pass this feedback on to your volunteer. ”

Richard, *Contact the Elderly*

“ Thanks so much for taking on this client. Where so many befriending services are shutting down, your service is lifesaving! ”

Una, *Glasgow City Council Social work*



Who we support

We support older adults (over 60 years old) in Greater Glasgow, who are lonely and/or isolated and are looking for companionship. After every referral, our experienced Volunteer Coordinators visit each potential client to assess their level of need and to find out more about them and their goals for having a befriender.

Number of Referrals

As of June 2018, we have received a total of 141 client referrals. Our referrals come from the Greater Glasgow area. 74% of these are female clients, and 26% of them are male clients.

Of these 57 referrals are matched or in the process of being matched.

13 clients are currently “on hold”, meaning that they cannot currently be matched, for example if they are in hospital.

4 clients have sadly passed away.

67 clients are in the “drop” category – most of these were either incorrect referrals or having had an assessment were found to be unsuitable for befriending or another solution has been deemed more appropriate.

We usually have a waiting list of over 20 people waiting for befriending services at any given time.

Number of Volunteers

As of June 2018, we have received 151 applicants for volunteer positions.

83 volunteers have been trained and of these 52 are matched or in the process of being matched.

Several volunteers participate in our group befriending events.

We provide both volunteers and clients with full support in the event of a befriending relationship coming to an end.

Support Work

We have supported 7 older adults who receive ongoing care and support at home. This is a paid for service that is bespoke to the needs of the user.





The Magic of the Match

Making a good match between clients and volunteers is crucial to the success of the one-to-one befriending relationship. In addition to visiting every client, our Volunteer Coordinators also interview every volunteer applicant and ensure we find out what the volunteer is looking for from the befriending experience. The Volunteer Coordinators will take many factors into account when matching up clients and volunteers. The fact that we now have 34 matches which have been in place for 3 months or more (and many of them for longer than that) is a testament to the care we take with this process.

What we do

One-to-one Befriending

To try to tackle the problem of loneliness and isolation, The No.1 Be-friending Agency has created a befriending service, where trained volunteers visit isolated older people and spend some time with them to have a wee chatter, a cup of tea, and to hear their stories.

We know befriending visits have proved to be tremendously helpful in battling the problem of loneliness and isolation. They make people feel that somebody cares about them, and that they have somebody they can talk to.

Befrienders also serve as a link to a wider network of help available for older adults who are at risk and can ring the bells of alarm if, for example, a person experiences any undue harm. For people without family members close by, this support can be invaluable.

13 Volunteers doing befriending for a year or more

17 Volunteers doing befriending for 6 months to a year

5 Volunteers doing befriending for 3 months to 6 months

1417 Total number of volunteer befriending hours completed by the above 40 volunteers (based on an hour per week each)



Group Befriending

Cup of Friendship

Our popular tea parties, called “Cup of Friendship” events started in September 2017 and take place monthly in Maryhill Hub, in the West End of Glasgow. Our events support older people who would otherwise not experience going out. These events started out because our volunteer coordinators, who also receive the referrals, realised there was a need for group activities. One-to-one befriending is not for everyone. In some cases, for example, a person who is referred to us suffers from dementia and would be unable to host a befriender weekly but could benefit greatly from a social gathering. In some other cases, the cup of friendship serves to support people who may be on our waiting list for befrienders a circle of friendly people and live music would be too much fun to miss. In most cases however, these community events are the only occasions for the attendees to get out of the house that week.

During these events, we have a cup of tea with cakes and biscuits and our volunteer musician, Arthur, plays some classic tunes and folksongs!

Join us for



so everybody can sing along. We also play bingo or a quiz game, depending on the mood. Our supporters are very generous in donating prizes, and these are hotly contested by our clients who can get very competitive!

So far, 30 people have participated in at least one of these events.

One-to-one and group befriending services are provided free of charge to the user.

We also offer bespoke support services that include care at home, house keeping as well help at home services. These services are paid for.



So far, we have recruited two amazing volunteers for this position. There was also a demand for a person to assist with organising the

events. Cristina, a final-year student at Glasgow University joined the organisation in May 2018 as our new Events Coordinator.



Some feedback from our clients:

“Attending this event has made a huge difference to me – I look forward to it a lot.”
(a new client who attended last two events and is still awaiting one-to-one befriending).

“Well, I thoroughly enjoyed that afternoon!”
(client on bus)

“This is one of the only two times my mum gets out each month and she really enjoys your event.”
(a client's daughter)

Plate of Friendship

We have collaborated with another social enterprise, the The Real Junk Food Project Glasgow, to serve lonely and isolated older people a delicious plate of food and friendship on Boxing Day, to tackle both the holiday loneliness epidemic and food waste.



Social impact statistics

What did our clients say*:



100%

said they were looking forward to the weekly visits by the volunteer



100%

said they were enjoying their visits by the volunteer



100%

felt that the befriending relationship was meaningful



58%

started going to Cup of Friendship events



42%

said that apart from conversation they can do things that they would not be able to do alone

At the initial assessment:



40%

said they felt lonely all the time



30%

said they rarely felt lonely



30%

said they felt lonely occasionally



100%

said they felt less lonely or isolated after at least 6 months

**We have asked 60% of those active clients who have had befrienders for longer than 6 months. Interviewees were chosen based on their willingness to be interviewed. The interviews were done by an independent party.*

What did our volunteers say**:



86%

said that befriending has improved their sense of well-being



86%

said that they felt more confident as a result of befriending



71%

said they considered their befriendees their friends



100%

said they felt valued as a No.1 befriender



100%

said they enjoyed the time they spent with their befriendees

***Based on an online survey in 2017 in which 60% of our volunteers participated*



Befriender case studies

Some clients, their family members and their coordinators or befriended comment on their experiences with the befriending service:

Anne

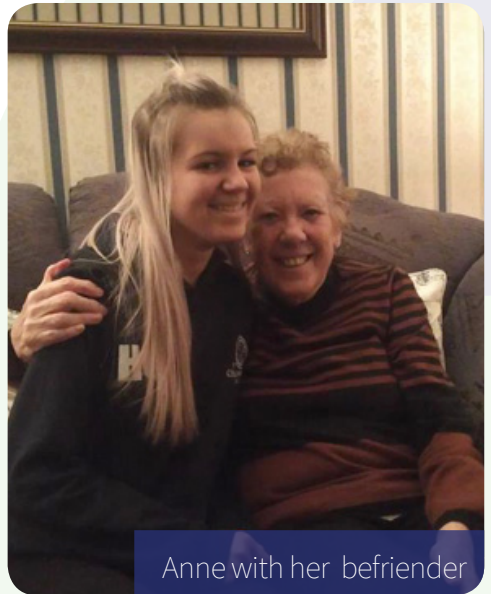
Anne's daughter:

"I work every day, and my mum does not really see anybody during the day. The carers come in, but they only stay for 20 minutes, do what they need to do and leave. She really likes Francine, her befriender. She really looks forward to the visits, she even looks forward to Francine phoning to arrange the visit."

"I tried to get her to go on her own to a tea party, but she wouldn't go alone. Francine is the only person who she would go with, because she feels more confident when she is there."

Client:

I really enjoy the visits, my friend is so lovely. I look forward to seeing her. We talk about everything. I had a busy life and I talk to her about that.



Anne with her befriender

Volunteer:

"The visit is the quickest hour of the week, it goes away so quickly. We usually have a wee laugh, a cup of tea and I sometimes paint her nails. We speak about a lot of different things, she did have quite a busy life and she misses things she used to be able to do. I love going, if I can't go for some reason, I miss her."



Aloise

Coordinator:

“This match is going really well despite an age difference of 83 years! They have a very special bond. When I asked what they usually talk about they both laughed and wouldn’t tell me.”

Client:

“I love my befriender, we have so much in common. I really look forward to her visits, she makes me laugh all the time. She is my life saver!”

Daughter:

“The visits really cheer my mom up, she has something to look forward to during the week and keeps her from getting depressed. I think they have a lot of fun together, and she taught her befriender how to make pancakes.”

Margaret

Daughter:

My mum always looks forward to her befriender’s visits and the visits make her so much happier. It also takes some weight off my shoulders as well.

Client:

“I love seeing my befriender, she is such a nice lassie. She usually takes me out and I really enjoy that. I used always go out, I was never in but know can’t go anywhere.”

Volunteer:

I hope Margaret benefits from the chats we have, and she certainly enjoys getting out of her apartment. I knew the Agency’s work was needed the moment my befriender told me how long it had been since she’d been out of her flat. That alone, would be enough of a reason for the visits, but I can see that it takes a weight off her sole carer as well.



Margaret at one of the social events



Betty

Community Connectors, referring organisation:

“Although we have discharged Betty from our services already, I know she has been really enjoying the visits and was really happy with having a befriender.”

Son:

“My mum absolutely loves having a befriender, she is a lot happier. She looks forward to the visits, she really likes her. She used to not be able to walk around the house, and now she has more confidence, and I think this is because she has a befriender.”

Client:

“Having a befriender is the best thing that could have happened to me. I am alone most of the time apart from a club I am taken to twice a week. My children live in other cities. My befriender would never miss a visit. She went on holiday once to Rome, and when she came back she told me all about it, everything she did. We always talk about what happened to us when we did not see each other.”

Volunteer:

“I love visiting my befriender, she is my friend now. I think she looks forward to seeing me, because she hardly sees anybody all week.”



Betty with her befriender





Rita at a Cup of Friendship event

Rita

Volunteer Coordinator:

“Rita is registered blind and can only see shadows, this prevents her from taking part in activities she previously enjoyed. Previously Rita was never home, she was always out keeping busy. Losing her sight took away Rita’s confidence and her independence. The only people Rita would interact with each day were her carers. Our volunteer has been visiting Rita for almost a year. Now she attends 2 clubs every week and has made friends. She no longer feels like a burden and has gained some of her independence back with her befriender encouraging her along the way.”

Client:

“I can’t even tell you how much I enjoy the visits. I love going out, and my befriender always takes me out for a wee walk. I can’t sit always inside, it makes me feel really bad

and I can’t go outside alone because I can’t see. I get very lonely.”

Son:

“My mum is so much happier now that she has a befriender. She used to complain about everything, but she never ever had anything bad to say about her befriender, she only talks about how great she is. She would not be this happy if she did not have a befriender.”



Rita enjoys the events so much she has even invited her friend Edna who is also registered blind. They both enjoy a good laugh!



Volunteer Case Studies

The organisation would not be able to carry out its life-changing work without our amazing volunteers. However, befriending can not only transform the life of the befriended, but also the life of the volunteer.

Some of our volunteer stories are shown below.

Altea's story

Altea has been befriending a gentleman for just over 7 months. He has mobility issues, recently lost his wife who had dementia and he is very lonely and isolated.

Altea's daughter was the gentleman's previous befriender but she moved away to India so Altea wanted to take over the role. She works full time for the Independent Living Alliance and has just completed a Masters in Mediation and Conflict Resolution. She has raised 4 children as a single parent who are grown up now living very happy and fulfilling lives and has just become a granny for the second time!

Altea visits her befriended every week without fail to have chats, laughs and to give him encouragement.

Altea's befriended tells her he is so happy to have her in his life.



Altea is a positive, warm, generous and caring person and she feels she gets so much from the befriending and enjoys making a difference in her befriended's life.



Rosie's story

"When my Papa died a couple of years ago, I was devastated. I sorely missed our conversations. The time we spent together meant so much to both of us, and we both took so much from it. I applied to be a befriender because I firmly believe that elderly people have so much wonderful insight and experience to share with the world, and no one should suffer loneliness in old age. Now I massively look forward to visiting my befriender, Cathie, every single week. She has so many amazing stories to tell and we both really value each other's company. No matter what kind of day I've

had, a cup of tea and some biscuits with Cathie brings a huge smile to my face."

Rosie is a full time professional and has a very highly stressful job but seeing her befriender every week gives her a sense of family and belonging.



We asked some of our other long-serving volunteers what they enjoyed most about befriending and what benefits they thought befriending had on their befriended. Here is what they thought:

“ I really enjoy that I get to know people that I wouldn't otherwise meet. I think that my befriender is much more talkative and outgoing now. The organisation clearly puts a lot of thought into pairing the right people up. ”

Gillian, volunteer

“ I love catching up with my befriender to cheer him up and to keep him company. It feels like he really looks forward to seeing me. Sometimes he is in a bit of a situation and I think the visits really cheer him up. ”

Michael, volunteer



“ I really enjoy spending time with my befriender. She is a very very anxious person and I feel like I can calm her down. She is much more relaxed now. I think it makes you feel really good to help somebody. My befriender doesn't have anybody. ”

Hannah, volunteer

“ What I enjoy the most, to put it succinctly, is the development of a friendship. As a volunteer and a board member, I would say the benefits of befriending for older people are getting the feeling of being valued and that somebody is taking an interest. The feeling of being valued brings happiness. Sadly, in our society we do not value older people as much as probably other cultures do. Older people used to be the head of the family but now they are very isolated. ”

Pat, volunteer



Befriender and Befriender, Pat and Alfred

“ I've had the opportunity to meet somebody that I wouldn't have met otherwise, and I made a new friend! I think my befriender is really lonely and really looks forward to seeing me. ”

Zoe, volunteer

“ I have recently moved to Glasgow, and befriending helps me a lot in getting used to the Glasgow accent and to the way of life here. I think me and my befriender both really enjoy the time we spend together. I also learn a lot about life. ”

Memory, volunteer

“ Befriending is humanly enriching. The visits are quality time for me. We are facing a social care crisis and the agency tackles this problem in an innovative way combining a business with the ethos of volunteering. ”

Pete, volunteer



Volunteer Pete



“ What I enjoy the most about befriending is that I know that I am giving somebody companionship and I am making somebody happy. You get a lot out of it as well, you learn something every day about history and past and I also learned about cooking. She is definitely happier now because she used to be very isolated. She says it opened a door to a new life. ”

Jayne, volunteer



Community Participation

We also ensure we contribute to events in our local community.

Our Managing Director Audrey Mutongi was invited to run a soap making workshop in the Govan Craft Cafe.

This was hugely successful with many older people who do not normally get the chance to get out to meet others attending, and lots of lovely soap made!



Volunteer Events



We regularly organise social events and gatherings to celebrate their contribution, usually in the company of some wine and cheese.

In April for the first time we held a Long Service Awards event, recognising the contribution of our volunteers who have been doing befriending for six months or more.

We are also working in partnership with Glasgow Kelvin College to support our volunteers to work towards a Community Achievement Award, enabling our volunteers to achieve a formal qualification in recognition of what they do.



Accounts and funders

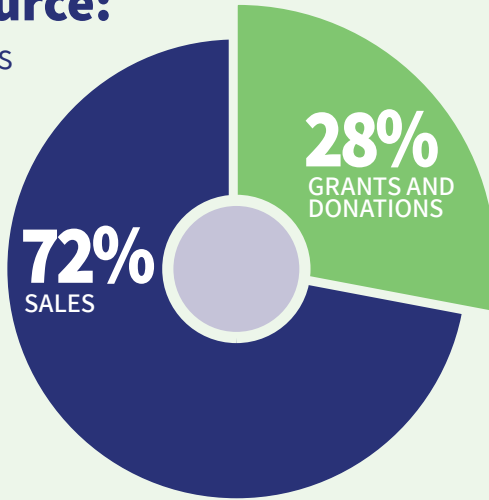
Total income

£283,021.33

Income by source:

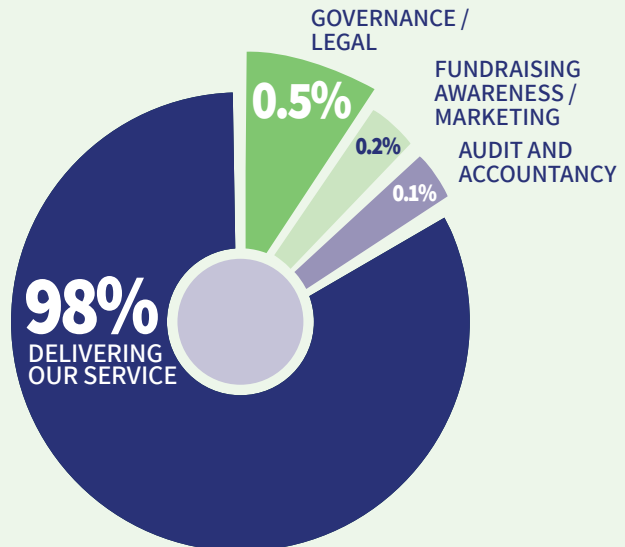
Grants and donations transactions

SALES FROM OUR PAID FOR SUPPORT SERVICES



Expenditure by type:

e.g. VOLUNTEER EXPENSES, OVERHEADS, WAGES ETC.



Looking forward

We are in the process of applying for the **Quality in Befriending Award**. As a growing organisation with an ever-increasing number of client referrals and a steady growth in volunteer numbers, and as part of the application process for the Quality in Befriending Award, we want to make sure that we provide an excellent level of support for our clients and volunteers. We recently asked for **feedback** from our volunteers and reevaluated our volunteer support process.

“ I think one of the organisation’s greatest strengths is its commitment to grow, learn and develop and for that reason it constantly evaluates what it does. It doesn’t just take it for granted that everything is going well. ”

Pat, Board member

We are also looking into more **collaborative projects** to bring different perspectives and resources to our work. For example, we are currently working on the setup of an innovative new project, Friends in Yoker. This is a ground-breaking partnership project, between The No.1 Befriending Agency, Yoker Parish Church and its parishioners, and Glasgow Social Work (NW) team. The parish church community is providing volunteers to do befriending in the community there, with the formal training and recruitment process provided by The No.1 Be-friending Agency.

Some volunteers will act as part-time Volunteer Coordinators, helping with ongoing support for the volunteer befrienders, and being supported by the paid Volunteer Coordinators from The No.1 Be-friending Agency. In this way both service users and volunteers will come from and be supported by the local community. We plan to replicate this model in other areas of Glasgow.



Message from the Chair

If you were to take a glimpse at the workings of The No.1 Be-friending Agency and distil its essence down to one word, you might just decide upon diversity. Diversity of skills, diversity of thinking, and diversity of purpose. This variety and breadth starts from the day to day operations and stretches all the way to the vision of society we wish to engender.

Take the balance of our staff. Within our wee Govan cell (located in the wonderfully converted Orkney Street Police Station) we manage to fit no less than nine nationalities. With this comes an invaluable environment for the interchange of ideas and influences which, in turn, helps us to drive creativity and innovation. Take the issue at the heart of our organisation; how can we embrace our ageing society and ensure everyone within it thrives? This is no easy question to answer, but through our diverse composition we bring a rich tapestry of perspectives that can edge us in the right direction.

So, within our diversity there is unity, it's the one thing we all

share. However, this isn't just true of our constitution, it's true of the wider society outside of our cell. To get a sense of just how much we take the benefits of a varied society for granted, think of the antonyms of diverse; homogeneity, conformity, paucity, monoculture... Who wants to live in a society describable through any of those?

This need for diversity encompasses culture, religion, race, sex, sexuality, and age. The last of these factors is, we believe, perhaps the most under-appreciated. Consider that by 2020 there will be 50% more older adults over 65 than there were 20 years ago. Or that by 2040, nearly one in seven people are projected to be over 75. Or how about the fact that there are over 15,000 centenarians amongst us!

At the No.1 Be-friending Agency we believe it's time to embrace this diversity of longevity and see the wisdom and warmth that comes from those who have experienced the ups and downs, the happiness and sorrows, the sublime and the mundane of all life that has to offer. Yet, presently, as a society



we do not treasure this pluralism of age. This is seen in the fact that 2 million people over 75 live alone, 75% of whom are women, and more than a million older people go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member. This is not acceptable, and it's what our organisation seeks to prevent by creating connections, boosting confidence, and improving the quality of life of people across Scotland. And we are making a real difference. To date we've provided an incredible 1400 hours of befriending. Whilst a drop in the ocean of systemic loneliness, it's a step in the right direction, and each of those hours helped both the isolated older adults and the volunteer lead their fullest, happiest lives.

Finally, as a social enterprise, we believe The No.1 Be-friending Agency is contributing to a diverse and vibrant economy. We tread the fine line on the spectrum between a for-profit business and a traditional charity, seeking to remain financially sustainable whilst ploughing any revenue back into the organisation to affect the

greatest number of people, and produce the most social value possible. Whilst not an easy task, without that relentless focus on profit we're able to see and value the individuals behind what we do, and never lose sight of what we're out to achieve.

So, whilst appreciating the present, here's to the future where a diverse workplace, diverse community, diverse society, and diverse economy help us all to live fuller happier lives!



Tommy McGlynn
Chairperson,
The No.1 **Be-friending** Agency





The No. 1
Be-friending
Agency

Supporting people to live fuller, happier lives

Contact us:

The No.1 Be-friending Agency
Govan Enterprise Centre, 18 Orkney Street, Glasgow G51 2BX

 0141 465 6998  info@befriend.org.uk  www.befriend.org.uk

We are a Scottish Community Interest Company (CIC). Company Registration SC516418.