

PEOPLE
HELPING
PEOPLE

 **GOOD
NEIGHBOURS
NETWORK**



BEFRIENDING

WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT AND SOME USEFUL GUIDELINES



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WHAT IS BEFRIENDING?

BEFRIENDING IS A ONE-TO-ONE, NON-JUDGEMENTAL RELATIONSHIP WHERE YOU VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE SOMEONE.

Many people benefit from the support of a befriender at a time of change in their life or when they are socially isolated due to illness or old age.

Befriending is about listening and supporting another person, through face to face, Zoom or telephone contact, where a befriending relationship is established to develop social contact and interaction.

Since 2016 the Good Neighbours Network has seen befriending activity double across Hampshire, as groups respond to local needs and encourage volunteers to develop a coordinated 'helping relationship' to tackle isolation and promote a sense of well-being.

Befriending is about acceptance and choice, not about creating dependence.

Befriending is about offering positive and regular contact and easing loneliness.

It is not about replacing social care requirements, solving someone's problems or friendship in the traditional sense.



“The chances are we've all been affected by Loneliness, either directly or through someone close to us. We can all do more to try and make a difference and make our country a less lonely place.”

-Minister for Loneliness Baroness Diana Barran

BEFRIENDING CAN PROVIDE
AN IMMENSELY POSITIVE
IMPACT IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

BEFRIENDING THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR'S WAY

GNN works with all groups that are part of the Network to develop good practice and operate safely. The GNN six stage guidelines are a part of this process, they are not exhaustive but will provide a solid basis from which to operate.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL GROUPS THINKING OF OFFERING A BEFRIENDING SERVICE:

NEED – is there already a befriending service in the area, if so what will your group be adding or doing differently?

PEOPLE – who is it the group wants to reach? What specific training may be required e.g. dementia awareness, mental health awareness or working with people with learning disabilities?

TYPE OF OFFER – face to face visits, telephone service or group meetings. Will the connections also include social visits? COVID-19 has impacted on befriending services and this is highlighted in more detail on page 18

FREQUENCY – weekly, fortnightly or monthly?

LENGTH – will it be on-going or time limited befriending?

SCALE OF OPERATION – how many people can your group help and how many suitable volunteers can the group recruit? How might the offer grow and increase capacity in time?

REFERRALS – who can make referrals e.g. GP, social worker, family or can people self-refer? If a group cannot help a person, how might they signpost to another organisation.

COORDINATOR – this is a key role, can your group identify or recruit someone suitable, who is organised and enthusiastic to coordinate the service?

NAME – what might you call the befriending group/service, something friendly will help set the tone i.e. 'Time to Chat', BeFriend

SIX STAGE GUIDE TO GNN BEFRIENDING

STAGE ONE

research and operational guidelines

Identify and agree on the sort of befriending service your group will offer

Agree clear aims and objectives

Put in place GNN policies and procedures to establish a commitment to safety for volunteers and services users

STAGE TWO

getting the right people involved

Recruit a Befriending Coordinator

Recruit and train volunteers and set up ongoing support and supervision

STAGE THREE

making it safe

Ensure that appropriate DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are complete and maintain a log of DBS certificate dates

Introduce Safeguarding Adults e-learning course (available through the members section of the GNN website)

STAGE FOUR

communication

Advertise the Befriending Service and contact referring agencies
e.g. GP, Adult Services

Contact is an important consideration here and many groups are now establishing separate contact points (telephone and email) for Befriender Coordinators as this means referrals will come direct and do not have to be passed forward by the Group Coordinator

Before you market the Befriending activity, consider having in place a wait list system as you may find demand outstrips supply

STAGE FIVE

effective mix and match

Carry out a clear and consistent assessment of needs and interest

Match and select people according to their availability and interests, be prepared to advise waiting if the match is not suitable

STAGE SIX

monitoring

Supervise befriending relationships and set **boundaries**

Provide ongoing support and training for the Befriending Coordinator

Assess progress and benefit

BOUNDARIES

A befriending relationship is not a friendship and as with any supportive relationship it can be easy to overstep limits, this is why it is very important to establish clear boundaries from the outset. These will help the befriending relationship to have the right expectations and enable the creation of a safe environment, with a defined understanding of the limitations.

Here it is useful to consider :

- How long will the relationship last for? How regular will the contact be? Often groups find it useful to begin relationships with a time limited structure, this can also help in the event of a dependency developing.
- The sharing of personal information – befrienders should not give their home address, email or phone number to the people they are befriending
- Friends and family of the befriender should not be introduced into the relationship as this can send a confused message
- It is important not to give or accept gifts as this could create a misunderstanding, set these parameters at the beginning of the relationship and explain them as the Group's policy to avoid any embarrassment
- Establish the location of visits – or in the event of a Zoom or telephone befriending a suitable time and length of call to expect
- Inappropriate behaviour – identify what it is and how it should be handled
- Clarify what concerns should be reported to the Befriending Coordinator
- Clear guidance on what and by whom concerns should be reported to e.g. referrers/referring agencies?
- What should be expected of the Befriender – clearly define from the outset what the role is and is not.
- Remind volunteers that they should not take on anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

ROLES: THE BEFRIENDER ROLE

This role is all about developing a trusting, supportive relationship with a befriender

- The role will need to be fully compliant with the groups policies and procedures i.e. confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding
- The befriender will need to complete an induction process and any ongoing training as arranged with the Befriender Coordinator
- The role requires an understanding of the need for boundaries
- The role requires an understanding of the importance of confidentiality, data protection and safe guarding
- The befriender must be fully aware of the reporting processes in the event of any issues or concerns
- The role will require being reliable and punctual
- The role will require a willingness to learn about and where appropriate link with other local organisations.

What makes a good volunteer befriender?

- Someone who is interested in other people
- Someone who is a good listener and empathic
- Someone who is respectful and non-judgemental
- Someone who is reliable and dependable

VOLUNTEERS ARE HIGHLY VALUED AS BEFRIENDERS AS THEY OFFER THEIR TIME TO OTHERS BECAUSE THEY WANT TO – THIS ACTION IN ITSELF CAN GIVE A BOOST TO SOMEONE'S SELF WORTH

ROLES: BEFRIENDER COORDINATOR ROLE

This is a key role which requires time, patience and a wide range of skills. Ideally it should be a separate role and not part of the groups other activities.

- With the support of those managing or leading the group, recruit and assess the interests and experience of befriending volunteers
- Ensure training requirements are met
- Process referrals, checking that the person has requested support or visits
- Assess needs of individuals
- Match befrienders and befriender
- Check in with befriender on a regular basis to ensure they are comfortable in their role and feeling safe
- Offer on-going regular support and supervision
- Support befrienders and befriender when the relationship comes to an end
- Report on a regular basis to the committee
- Keep clear records and evaluate the service
- Deal with volunteers' expenses
- Hold a working knowledge of the group's policies

What makes a good Befriending Coordinator?

- Someone with good communication and organisational skills
- Someone who understands and appreciates the art of volunteering and can empathise and support volunteers
- Someone who understands the need for boundaries and confidentiality
- Someone who understands the client group and the issues they may face
- Someone who is reliable and dependable

In addition it would be useful to:

- Assist the committee with the development of policies and procedures around befriending
- Keep up to date with relevant legislation and good practice
- Promote the service to potential volunteers and people who might appreciate a supportive befriending relationship
- Develop a relationship with referring agencies
- Keep up to date with local information about other activities or services that may be useful and appropriate.



VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND SUPPORT

RECRUITMENT

The recruitment of befrienders should be carried out in the same way as for any other Good Neighbour volunteers.

The Befriending Coordinator should be involved in the recruitment process, as it is their responsibility to match people.

It is advisable to work with other committee members to allow for a properly informed and fair decision about who is selected – this can be particularly important if a volunteer is considered not suitable for a befriender role.

INDUCTION PROGRAMME

This is an important part of the process and it can often be beneficial to run the induction programme before applying for DBS checks, as the volunteer may through the process decide that befriending is not what they want to do or you may discover that they would be better suited to other volunteering tasks.

Befriending volunteers should be given an induction covering:

- What is befriending
- The role of the befriender
- Boundaries and activities
- Confidentiality, Equal Opportunities, Lone Working and Safeguarding Adults

Additional training would be:

- Listening skills
- Specialist training for particular client groups i.e. Dementia, mental health awareness
- Safeguarding adults e-learning course
- Identifying risks

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

Each match should be subject to on-going review to make sure it is going well and is still appropriate.

Ideally this would take place a week or two after the first encounter and again at 6 – 12 weeks. If the match is proving successful a review period can be agreed with the Befriending Coordinator (or this may have already been established at the set up stage, if the relationship was initially given a time limit).

Due to the confidential nature of the befriending relationship, one to one support should be provided by the Befriending Coordinator.

Befrienders should always have the opportunity to discuss any concerns. This should be decided by the group and done on a regular basis, either in person, Zoom or on the phone – it can also be beneficial to do as a group of befrienders.

Other ways to support befrienders would include:

- Regular information sessions
- Website, email, newsletter, social media
- Encouraging peer support
- Organising befrienders social activities

With all of these supporting options it is important to remember **confidentiality**.

CLIENTS

CLIENT ASSESSMENT

Each group should carry out a needs assessment - this is usually the Befriending Coordinator's responsibility. It is important to make sure the particular needs match the Group's referral criteria and that the person involved both wants and needs a befriender (as sometimes another service may be more beneficial).

It is best for the assessment to take place face to face however, due to COVID restrictions this may not be possible and then either a Zoom or telephone call can be offered as an alternative. This is an opportunity to explain the process and what the Group has to offer, it is important to make sure that the person understands and is comfortable with the process – the interaction should be friendly and not rushed – it may be helpful to invite a family member or friend to join in this initial visit.

Explain how the Group is run, timescales involved in the process and offer a leaflet and a contact number.

Get to know a little about the person, their family situation, interests, history – check if there are any no-go areas.

Consider if there is a risk from challenging behaviour from the client.

Carry out a risk assessment of the environment for home visits or outings.

Client considerations

- Does the individual match the Group's referral criteria?
- Do they want a befriender?
- What do they expect from the befriender relationship?

UPON SUCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE ASSESMENT

- Start the matching process as soon as possible
- Let the person know what is happening
- Keep the referrer informed of progress
- If there are no suitable volunteers available let the befriender know that they will either be added to a waiting list (estimated time to wait) or sign post them to another service.

MATCHING

For any relationship to be successful it needs to be a good match and with a limited number of volunteers this may prove difficult but, every care should be taken to get this right. In the event of another opinion being required it should be discussed with the group managers or leaders.

Matching considerations:

- The befriender's capacity and experience
- Compatibility, personalities, interest and/or life experience
- Proximity to clients home and/or availability for telephone or Zoom alternatives
- It is important to get an idea of the sort of person the befriender will feel most comfortable with
- Each person involved must feel comfortable and safe in the match, for some this may prove more difficult and result in delays
- How much personal information should be shared- it is advisable to have a written profile of the befriender and the befriender which they can both agree can be shared during the matching process.

WAITING LISTS

You may not always have suitable volunteers to match people's needs or the capacity to deal with all the referrals received. If your group decides to operate a waiting list it is important to manage it well to avoid confusion or disappointment.

- Make sure it is regularly reviewed and updated
- Keep people and, if appropriate, referrers informed of progress
- Decide who takes priority e.g. greatest need, longest waiting
- Do not feel pressured to make a questionable or unsuitable match
- Limit the length of a waiting list to a manageable size
- Consider Zoom or telephone befriending options, especially if face to face is not available or COVID restrictions are preventing this option – it maybe that you can offer a greater number of telephone options compared to face to face – or if appropriate mix and match the approach
- Consider matching volunteers with more than one person
- If the waiting list is full or your group does not want to offer one, then consider how you could signpost the person on to another service or option.

FIRST MEETING

Once a match has been agreed, the first meeting can be set up – if at all possible the Befriending Coordinator should be present to make the introduction – this can also be arranged via a group WhatsApp or Zoom call. If not possible, then prearrange a time where the Befriending Coordinator can make contact to both the befriender and befriended separately to see how the 'first meeting' went and allow for feedback around any concerns.

ENDING THE BEFRIENDING RELATIONSHIP

The ending of the befriending relationship is a very critical stage. It is a situation when there can be mixed or misunderstood emotions on both sides and it is therefore important that it is dealt with sensitively.

SOME REASONS FOR ENDING THE BEFRIENDING RELATIONSHIP:

- A fixed time period was agreed
- It has run its natural course and is no longer necessary e.g. the client now has regained some confidence, joined a group, recovered from illness
- The person's needs change or they move away
- The relationship has gone beyond the boundaries agreed and is not sustainable
- The friendship has developed outside the boundaries set by the group. In this case it should be explained to the befriender and befriendee that the relationship can no longer be supported by the group and that insurance and expenses payments will no longer be provided – the current supportive relationship would end - a friendship may then if appropriate naturally develop outside of the group's parameters.

FIXED TIME PERIOD

If the befriending has been for a fixed time period both parties need to be made aware of the date of the last visit/contact scheduled – they may use the time to:

- Reflect on what they have both gained from the experience
- Acknowledge what has been successful
- Discuss any issues that may require further action
- Celebrate the befriending relationship.

UNPLANNED ENDING

Sometimes it happens – if the relationship ends abruptly without notice it may be upsetting for either party. Support should be offered by the Befriending Coordinator to make sure there is no ill feeling and that the person does not feel rejected. It is important to make sure any issues are resolved and details are logged if appropriate.

ONGOING

If it has been an ongoing relationship it is important to try to plan the closure. If possible have a notice period to allow time to discuss and plan either the end of the relationship or to introduce a new befriender.

BEFRIENDING COORDINATOR'S ROLE

CLARIFY BOTH PARTIES UNDERSTAND WHEN THE
BEFRIENDING RELATIONSHIP IS TO END
SUPPORT EACH PERSON IF NECESSARY
INFORM REFERRER IF APPROPRIATE

TOOLS

BOUNDARY CARDS

These can provide assistance with training and help prepare the volunteer in the role of befriender.

THE OTHER PERSON IS ATTENDING A SOCIAL EVENT IN THE EVENING AND ASKS IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GO WITH THEM. DO YOU AGREE TO GO?

THE PERSON YOU ARE VISITING TELLS YOU SOME MONEY HAS GONE MISSING. DO YOU MENTION THIS TO ANYONE ELSE?

YOUR BEFRIENDEE IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY FRAIL AND HAS NO CARE SUPPORT. SHOULD YOU MENTION THIS TO ANYONE?

WOULD YOU REACT TO A PASSING COMMENT YOU CONSIDER TO BE RACIST OR OFFENSIVE? IF SO, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

YOU ARE ASKED IF THE NEXT MEETING COULD BE AT A LOCAL PUB OR CAFE. DO YOU AGREE?

SHOULD YOU ALWAYS BE THE ONE WHO PAYS FOR TRIPS OUT?

THE OTHER PERSON ASKS WHY YOU WANTED TO BECOME A BEFRIENDER. WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?

SHOULD YOU BUY YOUR BEFRIENDEE A SMALL CHRISTMAS OR BIRTHDAY GIFT?

THE BEFRIENDEE NEEDS SOME CASH URGENTLY (E.G. TO PAY FOR FOOD). THEY ASK YOU TO LEND THEM SOME MONEY. WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

SHOULD YOU GIVE YOUR MOBILE NUMBER, EMAIL OR FACEBOOK DETAILS TO THE OTHER PERSON?

YOU ARE ASKED TO CHANGE A LIGHT BULB OR GET SOMETHING DOWN FROM THE LOFT. DO YOU AGREE TO HELP?

THE OTHER PERSON ASKS YOU FOR YOUR HOME ADDRESS. SHOULD YOU GIVE IT TO THEM?

SOME USEFUL CONVERSATION STARTERS

Conversations will provide the building blocks to the supporting relationship you are entering- by asking a story about a photograph or object in the room – or if on the telephone asking about a view from the window and inviting an explanation of how it makes them feel - these type of openings will place a value on the life of the other.

Is there a smell that evokes memories? Ask what it is and why and how it makes them feel - this will indicate you are making connections.

Learn or play a board or card game or app together or share a piece of music, sporting event or a magazine article - each will help with making sense of the world.

Ask what wise words have resonated with you the most and how might you pass these on- evoking memories may provide a connection with an appropriate life experience you have had and would find relevant to mention.

BEFRIENDING SCENARIO

Hazel looks forward to your visits. However last week you noticed she seemed very tired and out of sorts. You couldn't help noticing her cardigan was grubby which was completely out of character as Hazel always take pride in her appearance. You didn't say anything, thinking it wasn't your place to be critical. Since then you have become more concerned about her. What if something is seriously wrong? Do you think you should do or say anything as a visitor or befriender?

Safeguarding pocket tool

- This is a small handy credit card size reference guide, containing useful numbers in the event of a safeguarding concern or emergency.

COVID-19

Changed the way we all did everything and as the recommendations are subject to change we felt it best to signpost you direct to the appropriate government information from GOV.UK - www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Visit the 'How to help safely guidance' and 'Enabling safe and effective volunteering during coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

Meanwhile a few simple safety points to remember:

- Always only volunteer if you are able and feel well, with no self-isolation limitations.
- Maintain social distancing
- Wear a mask if required
- Wash hands regularly and use hand sanitiser with at least a 60% alcohol content
- Carry ID where possible
- Clean any surfaces, show tissue etiquette
- Report any concerns

If someone is at risk or appears to have care and support needs that are not being met, for example they are struggling to keep themselves clean or prepare food - contact the Hampshire Coronavirus Support and Helpline on [0333 370 4000](tel:03333704000).

If someone is at risk of neglect or abuse - contact Hampshire Adult Services' Referrals and Enquiries [0300 555 1386](tel:03005551386). For out of hours referral contact [0300 555 1373](tel:03005551373).

You should be aware to look out for signs such as domestic abuse, drug or alcohol misuse and decline in mental wellbeing and report any concerns to [0300 555 1386](tel:03005551386).

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO VISIT YOUR BEFRIENDEE THEN PERHAPS LOOK TO SET UP ANOTHER TOUCHPOINT VIA THE TELEPHONE OR A ZOOM CALL – THIS ALSO MEANS THAT YOU CAN STAY SAFE, SELF-ISOLATE IF REQUIRED AND STILL PROVIDE A VALUABLE VOLUNTEER ACT OF KINDNESS.

SAMPLE FORMS

All documentation will be subject to GDPR, follow your group's policy and procedures on this and apply as required.

NEEDS & RISK ASSESSMENT FORM FOR BEFRIENDER COORDINATOR (SAMPLE)

When taking on a new befriender, you should assess their needs and the capacity of the group to meet them.

Consider:

- Is the service provided by the Good Neighbours group appropriate for their needs?
- Are there any risks for the volunteer?
- Is the request within the capacity of Good Neighbours group volunteers?

It is useful to visit the befriender in person if possible. Ask the following questions as suggested in the sample forms to make sure their needs can be met.

SAMPLE FORMS

Full Name	
Date of Birth	
Address inc. postcode	
Telephone No.	
Emergency Contact Name & No.	
GP Name & Address	

Are there any specific health problems you need to know about, for example in relation to seeing, speaking, hearing or memory?

Any specific medical condition?

Are there any risks or hazards outside the home?

Are there any pets in the home - if so are they friendly and ask their names

Could the befriender's behaviour cause any concerns for the volunteer?

SAMPLE FORMS

RISK ASSESSMENT: TRANSPORT (SAMPLE)

Does the passenger need assistance walking from their front door?	Yes	No
Does the passenger need assistance getting into the car?	Yes	No
Does the passenger need to sit in the front seat of the car?	Yes	No
Does the passenger use a wheelchair?	Yes	No
If yes, what type of wheelchair?		
Does the passenger have a blue badge?	Yes	No
Does a carer/relative/friend need to accompany the client?	Yes	No
If yes, does the carer/relative/friend have any special requirements, for example, wheelchair user?	Yes	No
Any further information? Please list anything that will assist the driver when they pick the passenger up		

RISK ASSESSMENT: BEFRIENDING (SAMPLE)

Is the befriender at risk from any of the following? If yes, please give further details:			
Agitation or forgetfulness?	Yes	No	
Not taking medication?	Yes	No	
Poor food hygiene / not eating?	Yes	No	
Not wearing aid / call alarm?	Yes	No	
Any other person?	Yes	No	

What other services / activities does the person currently access?
Any additional services needed or requested?
If so any action taken, e.g. signposted to another service?

SAMPLE FORMS

ABOUT THE BEFRIENDEE (SAMPLE)

Likes to be known as?	
Carer / person who knows me best?	

Things that are important to me? Colour, music, nature, health, home, friends, family, pet

Hobbies and interests?

My life so far? Career, children, marriage, travel, highs and lows, dreams

Things that may worry or upset me?

Anything else you may like us to be aware of?

Date completed		By whom	
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RESOURCES

GNN ONGOING SUPPORT AND RESOURCE

- GNN Resource cafes – in person or on Zoom
- GNN learning and training events – in person or online
- Volunteer handbook
- GNN policies and procedures
- Safeguarding pocket guide.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Adult Services: www3.hants.gov.uk/adult-services

Arts & Health: www.occupationarts.org

Age Concern Information and Advice Services: www.ageconcernhampshire.org.uk

Campaign to End Loneliness: www.campaigntoendloneliness.org

Community Independence Team: www3.hants.gov.uk/community-independence

Dementia Friends: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Mentoring & Befriending Foundation: www.mandbf.org.uk

Older People's Wellbeing Trigger Tool: www3.hants.gov.uk/elearning/triggertool

GNN CONTACT

Telephone: 023 9289 9671

Email: info@goodneighbours.org.uk

 hampshire.gnn

 goodneighboursnetwork

