



THE BEFRIENDING JOURNEY

It's all about the difference we make!



THE BEFRIENDING JOURNEY

Whether you're feeling lonely and would like to chat with a familiar voice each week, or are looking to offer your time and support by volunteering to join our befriending team, Pershore Plus Volunteer Centre would like to hear from you!

Call 01386 554299 to find out all you need to know about our befriending service today!

Our service offers support and companionship to create a mutually beneficial and positive relationship, in which a volunteer gives their time to befriend a member of the community, improve their wellbeing and outlook, and help to alleviate their feelings of loneliness and isolation.

In turn, Pershore Plus will consider factors including the person's age, location and physical or mental health, alongside the current level of support that the person is already receiving from other agencies, and their deemed risk of social isolation.



Have you heard of befriending?

In-person or telephone befriending can certainly combat feelings of being socially isolated, but it isn't always the answer for everyone!

When a member of the community requests this service, one of the Pershore Plus team will call them to find out a little more about the person and they will be given appropriate information about the scheme and our organisation, along with details about the volunteer's supporting role.

During the initial call we will discuss:

- The aim of the befriending scheme
- The volunteer's role and responsibilities
- Confidentiality
- Boundaries
- Details for the point of contact at Pershore Plus Volunteer Centre
- The procedure for reporting any issues or concerns
- Cancelling a befriending appointment
- Details of all support available
- The matching process
- The next steps

It's really important to ensure that the customer actually needs and indeed wants a befriender.

THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER

Once matched, your volunteer will offer support and companionship via regular contact.

- Meetings will last no longer than 45 minutes
- The volunteer's contact details will remain private
- The volunteer will report any safeguarding concerns to their line manager
- The customer leads the conversation topic
- The volunteer will be compassionate and non-judgemental, and the relationship will be time lined



Have you ever considered volunteering?

The overall aim of the matching process is to achieve a positive compatibility which meets the needs and expectations of both the volunteer and the customer.

A good match will most likely lead to a solid relationship with less problems and risks, and ensure the most positive outcome. These pairings will be made based on the information gathered during the initial calls.

Sometimes a customer may have to wait to be matched with a volunteer. In this instance, the Volunteer Coordinator will keep individuals fully informed of the progress of potential matches.

Once a pairing has been proposed, both parties will be encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have before any conversations begin.

As part of the matching process, there is the option to reject the match offered before the initial meeting takes place, as once a dialogue has begun, the impact can be far worse.



SPECIFIC BEFRIENDING REQUESTS

Matching to accommodate specific requests can also cause delays, and we would encourage the customer to try an alternative pairing for a couple of meetings, to see if a bond can form. Matches such as these will be supported and supervised by the Pershore Plus team, in case the match does not work out as hoped.

During the matching process the Volunteer Coordinator will consider the following:

- The customer's needs
- The aim of the scheme
- Age, gender, sexuality and ethnicity
- The skills and experience of a matched volunteer
- Personalities
- Common interests between the matched parties
- The opinions of carers / relatives of the customer
- The current availability of the volunteer

Taking the time to match two parties together will pay dividends in the long run, and will ensure that the person needing the support and the volunteer both enjoy the time spent on each appointment.

Each match will be subject to an on-going review, with an initial assessment a week or two after the first encounter and then again at six to 12 weeks. Normally a befriending partnership would last for up to six months, but this is not set in stone.

The aim of this scheme is to leave the individual in a more positive place, with new links to the community and additional support if you need it.

Befriending support really does help to combat social isolation

Your time could make all the difference!

ENSURING IT'S A POSITIVE ENDING

Befriending relationships can come to an end for many reasons. It may be that the relationship has reached the end of the six month period, or that both parties have mutually agreed to end the relationship early.

In other instances, the relationship may break down for personal reasons or due to ill health, and just like the end of any relationship, this may evoke a range of feelings for the volunteer and the customer including relief, distress, sadness, disappointment or even anger.

We're all about supporting our community!

THE FIRST MEETING

The initial meeting between a volunteer and a matched customer can be quite daunting, and so the Volunteer Coordinator will always be present to make introductions, discuss boundaries, answer any questions and set a time and date for the next appointment.

The Volunteer Coordinator will then follow up with both parties to discuss how the first meeting went. If either party is unhappy with the match and not willing to meet again, this must be handled with extreme sensitivity.

Can you spare just one hour each week?

Follow us on social media



Ultimately, our befriending service is here to support those in our community and help alleviate social isolation for good.



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