

Guidance Notes for befriending clients in their homes

Community Care Network

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Guidance Notes

For Befriending Clients In Their Homes

1. Introduction

These are guidance notes which are applicable to volunteers who visit clients in their own homes. Please read them carefully. Please ask the Befriending Co-ordinator or Volunteer Manager if you have any additional questions or are unclear about any of the issues raised.

2. The Befriending Service

The Community Care Network Befriending Service is not a substitute for professional services but aims to compliment existing support. The service is mainly aimed at adults over the age of 60 and who are single. The aim of the scheme is to support people in South Elmsall, South Kirkby, Upton, Hemsworth and the surrounding villages who are feeling isolated and / or lonely and would benefit from companionship and someone to talk to on a regular basis.

As a result of feeling lonely and isolated from the community some people may visit health services, such as their GP or the local A&E on a more frequent basis than if they did not have these feelings. The Community Care Network will accept clients for referral from local GP's surgeries, health professionals and other agencies working in the local area. In certain cases the Community Care Network will also accept clients from friends and family too.

3. Objectives

A Community Care Network Volunteer will primarily provide companionship and someone to talk to with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing of the client. By providing this service we hope the clients emotional well-being will improve and that they will grow in confidence. To combat the issue of isolation volunteers will be able to provide their clients with information about local groups and clubs as well as encouraging their clients to attend them, helping them integrate into the local community.

4. Boundaries

In the initial meeting between you, the client, and the Befriending Co-ordinator a discussion will take place in order to agree how often the befriender will visit. Befrienders are unable to provide any medical or personal care or domestic support. The Befriending Co-ordinator will discuss what you will do together, how you will communicate, whether by telephone or by home visit, and what else you will either be able or unable to do.

We recognise that as the relationship matures or circumstances change, things will inevitably evolve so we do ask that you keep the Befriending Co-ordinator informed of any changes that may effect the relationship between you, the client and the Befriender. It is important that both the Befriender and the client are clear about each other's boundaries. We believe that the lack of clarity is more likely to cause problems than a client having unmet needs.

5. Confidentiality

Befrienders must not disclose any information about the client other than the designated Community Care Network staff or volunteers. If a client asks a befriender to keep something in confidence the befriender must insist that anything they are told which may cause them concern will have to be reported to the Community Care Network's Befriending Co-ordinator. All befriending volunteers and staff have signed a form agreeing to this. Befrienders are encouraged to discuss anything that they are unsure about with the Befriending Co-ordinator.

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6. Mutual respect

The Community Care Network does not tolerate discrimination in any form with regards to race, gender, religion, age, etc. We do not expect either clients or volunteers to tolerate this. Please report any concerns to the Befriending Co-ordinator.

7. Gifts

Befrienders do not personally accept any gifts or donations if offered to them by clients. We understand that clients often wish to express their thanks but we request that they never offer gifts or donations to the befriender in order to avoid any offense caused by their refusal. We also instruct all befrienders that they are not to accept gifts or donations. If you, the client or the befriender have any doubts, please discuss them with the Befriending Co-ordinator. Donations to the Community Care Network are gladly accepted but must be recorded and officially acknowledged. There is a very clear difference between a gift and payment for services and this line **MUST NEVER BE CROSSED**.

8. Telephone numbers

Befrienders are advised that they must never give out their home, work or mobile telephone numbers to clients. If a client needs to contact a befriender for any reason then this should be done through the Community Care Network office which can be reached on 01977 277119. The befriender, however, will be given the client's phone number. If phoning the client from their own telephone number they are advised to ensure they dial 141 prior to telephoning the client in order to withhold their number.

If a befriender does give out their personal telephone number to the client then the Community Care Network cannot take responsibility for any unwanted calls that they may receive from a client.

9. Safety

If at any time a befriender does not feel safe or feel uncomfortable in a client's home, they are trained to leave immediately and contact the Community Care Network's Befriending Co-ordinator. Should a client feel uncomfortable with a befriender then they should ask them to leave their home immediately and contact the Community Care Network's office on 01977 277119.

For security reasons befrienders are trained to call the Community Care Network Office when they arrive for an appointment and to contact the Community Care Network's office again when they leave.

10. Client safety

If at any time a befriender makes a visit to find that the client does not answer the door, they are then trained to try and contact the client on their mobile phone (if they have one). Failing this please the befriender should telephone the Community Care Network office, who will then try to locate the client to make sure that they are safe and well.

11. Tasks

Volunteers are trained to never perform tasks that they do not feel comfortable with. They are trained to never attempt to do anything that require professional training and insurance cover. They are taught never do anything that could put themselves or the client at risk of physical injury. Befrienders are primarily there to provide companionship and a listening ear. The most important thing is to be able to listen, observe and articulate their client's issues to someone who can help them. If either are unsure, they should always ask the Befriending Co-ordinator, who can provide the befriender and their client with the necessary information or the help of others trained in the specific area of need.

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12. Risk assessment

All homes visited by a Befriending Volunteer will be subject to a risk assessment carried out by a member of the Community Care Network and will be re-assessed every 6 months. However, if circumstances change in the meantime we would ask you to let us know. During a visit, should a befriender encounter any situation or equipment which seems unsafe, they are encouraged to talk to their client about it and report it immediately to the Befriending Co-ordinator.

13. Communication

Befrienders are trained to seek to ensure that if they make an appointment to visit a client they keep it. If a befriender is unable to make an arranged visit they should contact the client to make an alternative arrangement as soon as possible. The befriender should inform the Befriending Co-ordinator know of any changes of date or time. If a client needs to cancel a visit then we request that they let the Befriending Co-ordinator know as soon as possible. The Befriending Co-ordinator will then contact the befriender informing them of the changes. Befrienders are required to complete and return a brief monthly report on their visits to the Befriending Co-ordinator.

14. Visits

When the Community Care Network places a volunteer within a client's home we have a responsibility to ensure that both the befriender and the client are safe and well. The Community Care Network's office staff will be given an updated list of all Befriending visits on a weekly basis. We ask that all volunteers ring the office on 01977 277119 before each visit, to let us know that they are about to meet with the client, and again when they have left the property to let us know that the visit has been completed.

All befriending visits will take place Monday to Friday between the hours of 9:00am and 4.30pm to ensure that office staff are available to take calls between these times.

15. Activities

If you, as a client are thinking about getting out and about in the community, or maybe attending a club or local group, you can ask the Befriending Co-ordinator for advice on where to go. The Community Care Network has an every increasing wealth of information on organisations and things going on in the local area.

16. Training

All befrienders volunteering with the Community Care Network are required to attend a Befriender's training day before they start to volunteer. They will also have ongoing support and supervision and further training, where needed, throughout the voluntary role. Befrienders are able to speak to the Befriending Co-ordinator to discuss any further training needs as and when required.

17. Conclusion

Befrienders are men and women who give their time free of charge to help other people and put something back into their local community. Without them the Community Care Network's Befriending scheme would not exist. As an organisation the Community Care Network would like to thank them for their time and commitment and trust that they will be a blessing to you - the client.

We hope that you enjoy your visits!

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