

Age UK Wandsworth – Befriending Plus Service



Aim of the Service: Befriending Plus delivers support by unpaid volunteers that combines meaningful social contact for older people with low level support needs:

- Enabling clients to retain, gain and regain independence
- Providing practical support with companionship
- Reducing loneliness and social isolation
- Improving or maintaining overall wellbeing
- Helping clients stay independent for longer and feel confident in their own home
- Supporting older unpaid carers



Eligibility Criteria: This is a befriending project where clients **MUST** be referred by Adult Social Care Services (ASCS). The service is available to people who are:

- Aged 60 years plus
- Living in the Wandsworth Borough
- On the cusp of needing a package of care as a preventative alternative intervention or those already receiving a small individual care package, with the need for more social interaction
- An unpaid carer who is aged over 60, living in Wandsworth who has low level assessed needs (not for respite care)



Who is suitable to refer to the service: ASCS Staff will identify existing / preventative clients who are receiving or may be eligible to receive some level of support on a once weekly basis (i.e. non-regulatory activity, not including personal care / medication).

- Clients will be required to arrange the visits with the volunteer independently by telephone and have the capacity to remember the arrangements and visits
- Socially isolated clients who will benefit from low level support offered by a volunteer (unpaid), visiting for 1-2 hours per week depending on the volunteer's schedule



Who is unsuitable to refer to the service:

- Clients who are not engaging with services and are difficult to contact
- Those without telephones or who do not or cannot answer the phone
- Clients with moderate to high level mental health conditions
- Clients living with memory difficulties e.g. Dementia, if unable to remember visit times and volunteer arrangements
- Clients with addictions and regular use of alcohol or drugs. Clients referred should have abstained for more than 1 year
- Unsuitable or unsafe living conditions e.g. hoarders, smokers, unsociable pets



Volunteers are unable to offer:

- Regular grocery shopping
- Personal care, including washing, dressing and giving medication
- Obtaining cash for clients or taking clients to the bank
- Escorting clients to medical appointments and acting as their advocate
- Supporting with any financial or legal matters related to the client
- Applying for benefits or filling out forms for services
- Liaising with Health and Social Care professionals on behalf of the client
- Domestic help, such as cleaning, laundry, ironing, etc which replaces regular paid care



Examples of support volunteers may offer: Befriending Plus recruit's volunteers, who are comfortable combining the cup of tea and a chat role combined with some low-level support:

- A listening ear and companionship with visits once a week
- A regular welfare visit and a chat
- The opportunity to share interests and hobbies
- Help with administration tasks, such as sorting letters, preparing shopping lists, organising a diary or calendar for activities and appointments (excluding financial communication e.g. bank accounts, wills, debt, bills etc).
- Helping to organise appointments such as GP, dentist, hairdresser
- To support with local walks if appropriate
- Assisting the client to attend a small grocery shop or collect a few items on their behalf
- Encourage clients to engage with their local community to alleviate social isolation
- Assist clients to access Age UK Wandsworth services and other voluntary services
- Encourage movement/exercise to support mobility and help reduce the risk of falls
- Support clients to improve their digital skills and use digital devices
- Sign-posting to other services, finding helpful information and activities in the borough
- Assisting clients to undertake light household chores



“Mostly we have tea and natter for a couple hours. We laugh every time we’re together.

We keep each other company as friends do. Every now and then we book appointments or sort out bills or do a bit of shopping. We love walks when the weather permits.”

To refer to the Befriending Plus service, please fill in the relevant sections of the referral form and return it to bah@ageukwandsworth.org.uk

The referral form can be downloaded from our website:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wandsworth/about-us/professional-referrals/>

Age UK Wandsworth reserves the right to refuse any referrals at its discretion.