****

**JOB DESCRIPTION: Befriending Area Facilitator**

**Reporting to:** Service Manager

**Salary:** £12,490.00 per annum

**Terms:** Permanent

**Hours of work:** 20 hours a week

**Location**: Home based, to cover North Bucks and Aylesbury Vale

**Background to our services**

At Age UK Buckinghamshire *‘We put the interests of older people living in Buckinghamshire at the centre of everything we do by helping them achieve and maintain their independence and wellbeing’.* We do this by working together to improve older adults’ physical, cognitive, social and financial ‘health’, so they can achieve and maintain their independence and sense of well-being for longer.

We currently support older people with a range of services, including Information and Advice, Welfare Benefits, Befriending and Hospital Discharge Support - which features support to get home from hospital and up to 6 weeks practical community support aimed at preventing readmission. We also provide a range of Home Services like housekeeping and gardening.

Befriending Plus is a flagship service we have run for many years, which tackles the impact of social isolation and loneliness which can afflict anyone, but which has a significant and life debilitating impact on older people in our County. As we emerge from the Covid pandemic, many older people in Bucks have continued to be wary of social contact, have found the transition difficult, or through lack of confidence, ailing physical health or the loss of friends through illness, they have lost touch with people and their local community groups and support networks. This is what Befriending Plus addresses, matching a volunteer with a lonely older person for weekly contact and support that can last a lifetime:

* Alleviating loneliness caused by social isolation through weekly contact with a volunteer
* Encouraging access and enable safe access to digital connectivity
* Supporting participation in regular physical activity and other beneficial activities.
* Connecting through local communities, culture and personal interests of clients.

**The role**

We currently have 450 older adults across Bucks benefiting from the Befriending Plus service. This role covers an important ‘patch’ which includes the rural north of the County, as well as Aylesbury Vale including the more deprived urban centre of Aylesbury. Rural deprivation and the loneliness caused by lack of transport, infrastructure and distances between towns and villages is a recognised issue in Bucks, and this role will need to be mobile and active across the area with their own car. You will support this region by recruiting volunteers and matching them to older people most in need, and living alone, that you have assessed in-home. You will also manage our existing dedicated group of volunteers, supporting them with supervision and guidance, as well being a primary contact for clients in the area.

As Area Facilitator, you will receive referrals direct or from our office team, and visit older people in their own homes to complete holistic assessments in order to identify client needs, both for befriending and other services/entitlements. You will work with established and new volunteers in order to make fulfilling, successful matches with clients to combat social isolation and enhance wellbeing. In addition, you will work with key partners within the community to promote the service and the organisation and to forge positive and fruitful working relationships and contacts – this will include local organisations, groups and activities, social prescribers (linked to GP surgeries) and other charities. You will also at all times ensure the safety and well-being of staff, volunteers and clients, especially through safeguarding awareness and referrals as appropriate.

You are part of a team of 4 Area Facilitators working across the County and will come together regularly to share experiences, compare notes and plan activity, reporting into the Services Manager within Community Services.

**Job purpose**

To address the needs of the most lonely in the region, helping older people improve their social contact and re-engage with their local community, and maintain their independence for longer and more fruitfully. You will help recruit, engage and train our volunteer base, ensuring we nurture and develop this crucial resource to maximum effect. You’ll build strong relationships across the area and act as the face of Age UK Bucks there, ensuring we are well known and regarded, and are easy to access and refer to. You will bring your insight and knowledge into the charity and ensure we continue to learn about the needs of clients and the impact of our work, ensuring we work as a team to deliver a consistent and well regarded service.

**Main tasks and responsibilities**

**Effective management of clients and volunteers that befriend them, with a person-centred and compassionate approach**

* To act on referrals of older people to the service within SLAs and to ensure the client is aware of the remit of and boundaries of the service.
* To carry out a comprehensive, holistic assessment of the client, working together to establish potential outcomes, as well as identifying other possible needs.
* To ensure the completed assessment form and any subsequent contacts, change of details, referrals or correspondence is entered onto the organisation’s database, maintaining accurate records.
* To liaise with Adult Social Care, Health or third sector organisations as required with regards to any client concerns or other needs requiring support.
* To report any safeguarding concerns immediately in line with Age UK Bucks Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
* To match up a client to a volunteer, bearing in mind background, interests and experiences and to support both parties during the initial meeting and on an on-going basis.
* To review progress 3 monthly with each client and to maintain regular contact with volunteers ensuring that the agreed outcomes with clients are being achieved or adapted in accordance with clients’ needs and wishes.
* Help develop and deliver the induction and on-going training of new volunteers in conjunction with the Volunteer Coordinator, support their development and recognise their contribution
* To provide activity data and progress reports and collect case studies and stories to share with our organisation and for demonstrating impact
* To actively network and explore other activities and resources in the local area to enhance the service and partnership working and facilitate volunteer recruitment

**Build effective relationships with local and County-wide agents and partners**

* Develop the existing network of organisations, charities and groups that work in the area so we are well known and awareness of our services is high
* Represent Age UK Bucks at functions, events and activities as appropriate
* Develop further our referral networks and relationships including local GP social prescribers
* Engage with local Age Concern groups and offices (these are separate from Age UK)
* Develop a strong team ethic across the Area Facilitators and wider Age UK Bucks team

**Enhance the overall Age UK Bucks service and offer and impact**

* Share insight and knowledge about better ways to support clients and support and develop volunteers
* Collect case studies and stories we can use in impact evidence, grant applications and team engagement
* Contribute to team planning, development and innovations
* Seek training and development opportunities for your own role and progress
* Consider how you can use your role to improve our ability to fundraise and generate income

**Person specification**

Essential requirements

* An understanding of and commitment to the needs of older people
* You will be great with people and have excellent communication skills
* Excellent assessment skills (a key part of the role)
* Experience of working as or with volunteers
* Experience of inputting data onto database systems and the ability to retrieve statistical information as required
* Ability to remain calm under pressure and manage a wide range of tasks
* Ability to work as part of a team or to work on your own initiative
* Ability to liaise with a wide range of people, including clients, family members, carers and professionals
* Ability to drive and access to a vehicle during working hours is essential - some evening work may be necessary
* Live within Aylesbury Vale or North Bucks area.

Desirable

* Volunteer management
* Safeguarding knowledge and experience
* Knowledge of health and social care systems
* Working with older adults

**Organisational requirements**

* Commitment to the aims of the organisation and the ability to demonstrate the following values:  
    
  **Enabling:** We assist older people to live independently and exercise choice

**Influential:** We listen to older people, represent their interests and ensure their voices are heard

**Dynamic:** We are innovative, driven by results and consistently deliver for older people

**Caring:** We are passionate about what we do and care about each individual

**Expert:** We are authoritative, trusted and quality orientated

* Awareness of health, safety and welfare of staff, volunteers and members of the public

This job description may change from time to time according to the needs of the organisation.