

## Befriending Role description

### What we are looking for

We are looking for volunteer befrienders (face to face and telephone) to help us address isolation and loneliness amongst older people in East London. You'll need to have up to 1 hour a week to regularly contribute to communicating with the older person you are matched with.

### Why these roles are needed

Age UK East London works with older people across Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham. These boroughs have the 3rd, 5th and 6th highest levels of loneliness in London respectively (% of adults who feel lonely often or always, according to the Public Health Outcomes Framework). They also have amongst the highest rates of pensioner poverty in the country, and lowest rates of healthy life expectancy.

As well as being vibrant, exciting places to live they are also densely populated, and expensive; – many older people struggle to afford to engage with life outside their front door. Further, rising housing costs are leading families to leave the area; when they do so they often leave their older relatives without support and companionship.

We are delighted to have secured funding to deliver a 24-month befriending programme. This exciting opportunity will support the delivery of our ambitious five-year strategy by:

- Promoting Independence - ensuring more older people can stay independent for longer
- Providing Connection - enabling friendship and social connection for older People

The befriending service will be provided through 2 different strands which aim to support older people in different ways based on the needs identified via an assessment.

Clients will enter the strand that is most appropriate to their needs.

- **Strand A:** We will offer a local face-to-face service of up to 1 hour for 26 weeks. Strand A provision would be appropriate for older people who have experienced a recent life event, such as a hospital admission, bereavement or home move and who need time limited support and guidance to connect with suitable services and activities.
- **Strands B:** We will offer ongoing support either face-to-face of up to 1 hour or by telephone between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Strand B provision is for older people leaving Strand A that require long term support or for those who are identified as needing ongoing face-to-face or local telephone befriending support on entry to the programme.

As a befriender you will be asked to select your type of volunteering preference.

Referrals will primarily come from our hospital discharge services but can come from the older person's family or another professional. Once the referral has been received, a

member of staff or a volunteer assessor will carry out an 'initial assessment' to identify the needs of the older person and any potential barriers they may be facing. Based on the assessment, we will identify which strand best meets their need and we will then match the older person with a suitable befriender.

<b>Purpose of Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide companionship, emotional support, and a listening ear to people who may be lonely or isolated.</li> <li>- Provide monthly reports to the Volunteer Manager on your client.</li> </ul>
<b>Key tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make a regular weekly visit or phone call to a client who has been matched to you, at a time suitable to the older person.</li> <li>- Provide conversation and company.</li> <li>- Spend time chatting with the client, talking with them about their current and past life experiences.</li> <li>- Report any emerging issues or concerns that the older person has agreed to be shared with us such as safeguarding issues or a change in personal circumstance or health.</li> <li>- Make the client aware of any other services across AUKEL they may benefit from.</li> <li>- Maintain records of client contact and send this to the Volunteer Manager on a monthly basis.</li> <li>- Regularly meet with your befriending peers and supervisor, to share experiences, get support and reflect.</li> </ul>
<b>Skills and attributes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding loneliness and social isolation.</li> <li>- Good communication skills with a friendly approachable manner.</li> <li>- Keen on building a strong befriending relationship.</li> <li>- A desire to learn more about an individual and their interests and their past, and life history.</li> <li>- Consistency and reliability.</li> <li>- Understanding of Confidentiality.</li> <li>- Understanding of and empathy with the needs of older people.</li> <li>- Patience and Sensitivity.</li> <li>- Confidence to deal with emergencies.</li> <li>- Record keeping.</li> <li>- Basic IT skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Support Provided</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You will be inducted in cohorts with other volunteers.</li> <li>- Training for the role is provided including Safeguarding, Making Every Contact Count, Sexual Harassment and Building a positive volunteering experience and other more.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing support including regular supervision by the Volunteer Manager.</li> <li>- Group supervision with other befrienders. Groups supervision is a safe place where you can share experiences, challenges, and successes, process emotion and learn from each other.</li> <li>- Reimbursement of agreed expenses.</li> <li>- Access to an AGE UK Discount portal provided by Aon.</li> <li>- Monthly volunteer newsletter</li> </ul> <p>We hold an annual Volunteer Award event where we celebrate and recognise the contribution of our Volunteers!</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making a Difference: Volunteering allows you to have a tangible impact on someone's life, particularly those in vulnerable situations. Helping older people can provide a strong sense of accomplishment and purpose.</li> <li>- Emotional Rewards</li> <li>- Intergenerational Connections</li> <li>- Learning and Skill Development</li> <li>- Enhancing Career Prospects</li> <li>- Building Empathy and Compassion</li> <li>- Giving Back to the Community</li> <li>- Social and celebration events</li> </ul>
<b>Commitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We expect a minimum of 6 months commitment but would ideally prefer more of a longer-term commitment.</li> <li>- Weekly commitment is between 30 minutes to 1 hour for client plus one/two hours monthly for reporting.</li> </ul>
<b>How to apply</b>	<p><b>Online</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply through our <b>website</b>:  <a href="https://www.ageuk.org.uk/eastlondon/get-involved/volunteer2/application-form/">https://www.ageuk.org.uk/eastlondon/get-involved/volunteer2/application-form/</a></li> <li>• Contact us via email at <a href="mailto:volunteering@ageukeastlondon.org.uk">volunteering@ageukeastlondon.org.uk</a> or on 0208 981 7124</li> </ul> <p><b>In person:</b>  You can drop off your CV or leave your contact details at one of our offices below and the Volunteering team will be in touch with you.</p> <p><b>Tower Hamlets Head Office</b>  82 Russia Lane</p>

	<p>London, E2 9LU</p> <p><b>Tower Hamlets Activities Centre</b>  Merchant Street Hub  Tower Hamlets Methodist Church  1 Merchant Street  E3 4LY</p> <p><b>Newham Office</b>  655 Barking Road  Plaistow, London, E13 9EX</p> <p><b>Hackney Office and Activities Centre (Marie Lloyd Day Centre)</b>  29 Queensbridge Road E8 3LA</p>
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## Volunteer Journey

### If you are interested, we will ask you to:

- Complete an application form
- Meet with the Volunteer Team
- Provide details of two Referees
- Complete an Enhanced DBS check (we arrange this with you)
- Complete induction and training (as laid out above)

We understand that completing the various steps takes time and we support and keep in touch with you through the process.

As this role brings our volunteers into regular contact with vulnerable older people, we make sure that all volunteers understand their role and have completed our recruitment procedures to both our and their satisfaction.

### Do you have any questions

Feel free to reach out with any questions by email at [volunteering@ageukeastlondon.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ageukeastlondon.org.uk) or on 02089817124 or pop into any of our offices (listed above) to chat with a member of our team.