

Volunteer Assessor Role description

What we are looking for

We are looking for volunteer assessor to support our Befriending service and help us address isolation and loneliness amongst older people in East London.

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.

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.

The assessment will be carried out using a **Guided Conversation** approach.

A 'Guided Conversation' or "what matters conversation" should be used to explore with the older person:

- a. How they want to live their life
- b. What might be preventing that happening
- c. What support might be required to overcome these barriers

This method is useful when supporting someone facing loneliness or social isolation as it focuses on meaningfulness but also uncovers the person's route leading to their current need by discussing and understanding the factors that might be contributing to someone's loneliness and explores how things could change.

A 'Guided Conversation' is about facilitation and uses techniques such as open-ended questions, active listening, probing and clarifying. Full guidance will be provided.

Purpose of Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrange and carry out assessment for new service users within the befriending service using the Guided Conversation approach, in order to gather appropriate information about the older person, their needs, and what a befriender will be expected (and not expected) to do.• Ensure that the person wants a befriender, has given consent, confidentiality has been discussed, and the person is able and willing to join the service.• Ensure that volunteers and service users are well-matched and that the service runs safely, effectively, and in line with organisational standards.
Key tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carry out a needs assessment for new service users referred to the befriending service. It could be a telephone-based discussion or review of a referral form or a home visit.• Gather key information such as visit preferences, activity interests, potential risks, and any unmet needs.• Complete assessment forms and input information into the online database• Refer service users to other services where appropriate• Match service users with suitable volunteer befrienders• Introduce befriender and service user, and carry out a 6-week review with both parties• Maintain accurate records and liaise with staff throughout the process

Skills and attributes Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication skills with a friendly approachable manner. • Confident using IT • Empathy and understanding of older people. • Understanding loneliness and social isolation. • Consistency and reliability. • Understanding of Confidentiality. • Understanding of and empathy with the needs of older people. • Patience and Sensitivity. • Confidence to deal with emergencies. • Record keeping. • Ideal for students studying Health & Social Care, though open to all.
Support Provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be inducted in cohorts with other volunteers. • Training for the role is provided including Safeguarding, Making Every Contact Count, Sexual Harassment and Building a positive volunteering experience and other more. • Ongoing support including regular supervision by the Volunteer Manager. • Group supervision with other volunteers. Groups supervision is a safe place where you can share experiences, challenges, and successes, process emotion and learn from each other. • Reimbursement of agreed expenses. • Access to an AGE UK Discount portal provided by Aon. • Monthly volunteer newsletter. <p>We hold an annual Volunteer Award event where we celebrate and recognise the contribution of our Volunteers!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to in-house training opportunities • You will receive supervision and support throughout your course placement from your named supervisor
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a Real Difference: Have a direct impact on the lives of • 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. • Emotional Rewards • Intergenerational Connections • Learning and Skill Development • Enhancing Career Prospects • Building Empathy and Compassion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving Back to the Community • Social and celebration events • Placement Support: Ideal for Health & Social Care students—gain placement hours with supervision and guidance from a named supervisor • Insight into Care Needs.
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We expect a minimum of 6 months commitment but would ideally prefer more of a longer-term commitment. • Weekly commitment 2 to 3 hours.
How to apply	<p>Online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply through our website: https://www.ageuk.org.uk/eastlondon/get-involved/volunteer2/application-form/ • Contact us via email at volunteering@ageukeastlondon.org.uk or on 0208 981 7124 <p>In person: 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>Tower Hamlets Head Office 82 Russia Lane London, E2 9LU</p> <p>Tower Hamlets Activities Centre Merchant Street Hub Tower Hamlets Methodist Church 1 Merchant Street E3 4LY</p> <p>Newham Office 655 Barking Road Plaistow, London, E13 9EX</p> <p>Hackney Office and Activities Centre (Marie Lloyd Day Centre) 29 Queensbridge Road E8 3LA</p>

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 or on 02089817124 or pop into any of our offices (listed above) to chat with a member of our team.