

Volunteer Telephone Befriender

Age UK Northumberland's (AUKN) mission is to promote the well being of people over the age of 50 in and around the County of Northumberland, helping to make life enjoyable and fulfilling through the provision of a range of Information, Advice and Advocacy Services, Health and Wellbeing support and Befriending Services.

As part of our Befriending Services, we provide Befriending Calls, a half an hour scheduled call provided by a trained and DBS checked volunteer. The aim of the call is to provide companionship, a listening ear and help build confidence. Many of our 'Friends' go on to join our social groups across the County and build new connections.

During Covid-19 we have seen an exponential increase in the number of people requiring support and this demand is continuing to rise.

We are looking for Volunteer Telephone Befrienders to join our team of 23 volunteers. You will receive an induction to learn about the services that AUKN provides and full training in the role of Volunteer Telephone Befriender and our CRM systems, before being matched and introduced to your call list.

This is a flexible role in terms of weekly working time, though we ask that our volunteers give at least half a day per week, this allows for the completion of 4 call and notes.

Anticipated Time Commitment:	Half or full day each week, Monday to Friday between 9am – 5pm.
Expenses:	Travel expenses, up to a maximum round trip of 20 miles, to the AUKN office, to attend meetings and attend training. Car parking costs where appropriate.
Location:	Home working / The Round House, Lintonville Parkway, NE63 9JZ
Responsible to:	Befriending Co-ordinator

Purpose of Role:

To provide structured companionship by telephone to older people who are socially isolated due to health, disability or personal circumstances.

Expected tasks:

1. To reduce feelings of isolation or loneliness by developing a rapport with a named individual through a weekly telephone conversation.
2. To be aware of the range of resources available to the service user.

3. Maintain a calm, friendly and helpful manner with service users, staff and other volunteers.
4. Maintain accurate records of all calls received using our online database system.
5. Attend “team meetings” and all necessary training (this may be online meetings / training).
6. Be aware of client confidentiality and that of staff and other volunteers.
7. Identify positive issues and document areas of concern that might arise from the friendship and discuss any issues with the Befriending Coordinator.
8. Liaise with the Befriending Co-ordinator about rotas and inform her of any foreseeable absences such as holidays, providing as much notice as possible.
9. Inform the Befriending Co-ordinator of any change in circumstances that may affect the volunteers’ ability to participate in the project or, when the volunteer no longer wishes to be involved, with as much notice as possible.

Personal Attributes

Applicants must:

- Possess a pleasant, friendly and outgoing manner.
- Be able to work on own and as part of a team.
- Feel comfortable using the telephone to speak with older people and able to make conversations.
- Be able to communicate effectively (written & verbal).
- Be computer literate and have access to a computer
- Have an understanding of and empathy for people with different backgrounds and life experiences to your own.
- Be reliable, trustworthy, honest and committed to the volunteer role
- Have good listening skills.
- Have empathy for older people and be sympathetic towards their needs.
- Have an understanding of the importance of maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Understand that clients may be vulnerable, isolated and/or in poor health.

Training provision: Training in the use of the computer record system will be provided along with ongoing personal development and support from the Befriending Co-ordinator.

All of these arrangements are binding in honour only and not intended to be legally binding. AUKN will seek a Disclosure & Barring Service criminal record check if relevant to the volunteer role.

Please contact Susan Chrisp, Volunteer Co-ordinator on 01670 784 800 if you would like to discuss the role further or email volunteers@ageuk-northumberland.org.uk