

Volunteer Role Description

Enabling Connections Volunteer

Role of an Enabling Connections Volunteer

Enabling Connections Volunteers provide friendly, structured, face-to-face support to older people (50 years +) who are experiencing loneliness and social isolation. Through a goal-setting approach, volunteers help older people build confidence, increase social connections, and develop the skills and resilience needed to engage more fully with their community.

The Enabling Connections programme recognises that every person's experience of loneliness is different. Volunteers support older people to identify personal goals and work towards meaningful changes that improve wellbeing, social connectedness, and independence. Support is typically provided for up to six months, with goals reviewed regularly to ensure they remain achievable and relevant.

This role forms part of Age UK Solihull's commitment to reducing loneliness and isolation and enabling older people to access sustainable community support and opportunities.

Tasks of an Enabling Connections Volunteer

The tasks undertaken by volunteers will vary according to the individual needs, aspirations and goals of the older person they are supporting. All activities will be delivered in line with Age UK Solihull policies, procedures and safeguarding requirements.

The role includes:

- Developing and maintaining a positive, supportive relationship with the older person you are matched with.
- Providing regular face-to-face support over a period of up to six months.
- Supporting older people to identify, set and work towards personalised goals that reduce loneliness and social isolation.
- Using guided conversations to help older people explore what matters to them and identify practical next steps.
- Encouraging confidence, motivation and resilience to support behaviour change and social participation.
- Helping older people access local activities, groups, services and community resources.
- Supporting older people to attend activities or services for the first time where appropriate.
- Acting as a community connector by sharing information about opportunities that match an individual's interests and goals.

- Encouraging older people to develop skills and confidence to maintain social connections independently.
- Monitoring progress towards agreed goals and celebrating achievements.
- Recording contacts, activities and outcomes as required by the programme.
- Providing feedback and information to support service monitoring and evaluation.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns or changes in an older person's circumstances to the Coordinator.
- Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and confidentiality at all times.
- Attending volunteer supervision, training and support meetings.
- Working alongside the Enabling Connections Coordinator to ensure safe and effective service delivery.
- Upholding Age UK Solihull's values, policies and procedures at all times.

Experience, Skills and Attitudes Required

The programme values volunteers from all backgrounds and recognises the wide range of experiences and skills volunteers can bring to supporting older people.

Essential Requirements

- Aged 18 years or over.
- Successful completion of an informal interview and induction process.
- Completion of all mandatory training before supporting clients.
- Satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Commitment to Age UK Solihull's values and approach to supporting older people.

Personal Qualities

We are looking for volunteers who are:

- Friendly, patient and approachable.
- Good listeners with empathy and understanding.
- Confident communicating with older people.
- Reliable and dependable.
- Able to motivate and encourage others.
- Comfortable supporting people to work towards goals.
- Interested in helping people build confidence and independence.
- Non-judgemental and inclusive.
- Able to maintain confidentiality and appropriate boundaries.
- Willing to seek guidance and support when needed.

- Comfortable volunteering face-to-face in community settings and, where appropriate, in people's homes

Personal Values

- Respect for the dignity, independence and individuality of older people.
- Acceptance of people from all backgrounds.
- Commitment to treating others fairly and with compassion.
- Belief that everyone has the ability to make positive changes with the right support.

Training

Mandatory training may include:

- Understanding loneliness and social isolation
- Communication skills
- Building positive befriending relationships
- Guided conversations
- Confidence building and goal setting
- Befrienders as community connectors
- Boundaries and confidentiality
- Safeguarding older people
- Lone Working
- Health and Safety
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Record Keeping
- Managing Endings
- Data Protection and Cyber Security
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Dementia Awareness

Additional training and development opportunities may be available throughout the programme.

Minimum Commitment

- Minimum of 2 hrs per week.
- Commitment to support an older person throughout their agreed programme journey, typically up to six months.
- Attendance at supervision sessions and required training

Expenses

All reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with Age UK Solihull's Volunteer Expenses Policy. Mileage is currently reimbursed at 45p per mile.

Support Provided

Volunteers will receive:

- Full induction and training.
- Ongoing supervision and support from the Enabling Connections Coordinator.
- Opportunities to attend volunteer meetings and development sessions.
- Access to additional guidance and resources throughout the programme.
- Recognition and appreciation for their contribution

Benefits of Volunteering

By becoming an Enabling Connections Volunteer, you will:

- Make a meaningful difference to the lives of older people experiencing loneliness and isolation.
- Help older people achieve personal goals and build lasting social connections.
- Develop skills in communication, mentoring, goal setting and community engagement.
- Gain valuable volunteer experience.
- Meet new people and become part of a supportive volunteer team.
- Contribute to a programme that helps older people remain active, connected and independent within their communities.