

Enabling Connections

A Goal-setting Befriending Service for Older People

Referral Criteria

Service Overview

This goal-setting befriending service aims to identify and respond to an older person's route into loneliness or isolation following a recent life event and help the older person seek solutions to find a potential route out of their loneliness or social isolation. Using behaviour change techniques this intervention is offered for up to six months to people identifying as lonely or isolated.

Participants will work with a Befriending Coordinator and a Volunteer Befriender to identify personal goals and take practical steps towards becoming more socially connected.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the service, individuals must:

Age and Location

- Be aged 50 years or over.
- Live within Herefordshire or South Worcestershire.

Circumstances

Be experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness linked to a recent life event, such as:

- Bereavement
- Hospital admission
- House move or relocation
- Health condition impacting independence or community participation

Engagement and Commitment

The individual must:

- Be willing and able to participate in a goal-setting process.
- Be willing to review progress regularly with their volunteer or Service Coordinator.
- Be able to meet with a volunteer approximately once per week over a six-month period.
- Understand and accept the commitment involved in participating in the service.

- Be motivated to increase their social connections, confidence, and community involvement.
- Be able to communicate effectively with the volunteer and Scheme Coordinator and engage in conversations about personal goals and aspirations.

Exclusion Criteria

This service is not suitable for individuals who:

- Have moderate or advanced dementia or significant cognitive impairment that would prevent meaningful participation in the coaching process.
- Display behaviours that may place themselves, volunteers, or others at risk.
- Have complex or unmanaged mental health needs requiring specialist support.
- Are currently misusing drugs or alcohol, or whose substance use would affect their ability to engage safely with the service.
- Require intensive support, crisis intervention, or ongoing professional therapeutic input.

Service Limitations

The Service is designed to support social connection and community engagement. It does not provide:

- Personal care.
- Domestic or household tasks.
- Transport services.
- Counselling or mental health treatment.
- Advocacy services.
- Accompaniment to medical, social care, or other appointments.
- Emergency or crisis intervention support.

Additional Considerations

Referrals will be assessed on an individual basis to ensure that the person's needs are appropriate for a volunteer-led goal-setting befriending service and the individual is likely to benefit from support focused on increasing social connections and community participation.