



Telephone Befriending Service

Volunteer Handbook

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1. Being a Telephone Befriending Volunteer

Our team of volunteers are essential to making the telephone befriending service a success.

The Telephone Befriending Service:-

- Aims to reduce loneliness and isolation for older people in Bristol.
- Provides weekly telephone befriending calls of approximately 20 minutes.
- Provides a listening ear and a friendly chat.
- Provides information about services and activities that might benefit the client
- If necessary to reassure someone, reading through the latest advice about COVID-19 with them from the NHS 111 online web page. **Do not give your own opinion or add to the advice with information you have heard elsewhere.**
- Can identify when someone needs further help and signpost or refer people on to other sources of help.

You will provide the service from your own home.

The role involves:-

- Making weekly telephone calls to a socially isolated older person.
- Having a chat to relieve their isolation.
- Reporting any concerns or worries to the telephone services co-coordinator.
- Signposting to a wide range of community and statutory services for older people.
- Recording information on a log and other monitoring forms.
- Adhering to all Age UK Bristol policies and procedures, such as confidentiality, health and safety and equal opportunities.
- Attending training sessions and volunteer meetings as appropriate.

2. Telephone Befriending Service Overview

Steps	Action	By whom
Enquiry		
Enquiry received	Send out referral paperwork by email or complete over the phone	Co-ordinator/ Administrator
	log details on the enquiry log	Co-ordinator
Referral		
Referral received	Call client to talk about the service, check they would still like to join and what would be the best day and time. Complete consent and emergency contact details form	Co-ordinator/ Administrator
Joining the service		
Assigning client to a volunteer	Handover client details to one of the volunteers and create hardcopy file.	Co-ordinator
Welcome sheet	Complete, send and file welcome sheet	Co-ordinator/ Administrator
Administration		
Update the enquiry spreadsheet	Update details on the spread and add client to the active client tab	Co-ordinator/ Administrator
Add client to Charity Log	Add contact under telephone befriending and assign to volunteer	Co-ordinator/ Administrator

3. Making a Befriending Call

a. Call Logs

It is important that a comprehensive, clear and accurate record is kept of all calls. This information is used to monitor and manage the service, support fundraising and help keep the service free. Call logs are also vital if you ever need to phone someone else's client.

Use the template provided to record the details of your befriending calls, including any signposting. This form should be sent to the Telephone Services Co-ordinator every week.

Information must be recorded and retained securely, and in line with general data protection legislation. Please see sections: 4, 5 and 15 of this handbook.

b. Signposting

It can often be very difficult to know where to turn to for different sources of help - even more so if you are isolated and housebound. Therefore, **signposting is a very important part of a high quality**

telephone befriending service. It means that people are not left alone struggling to find the right service or agency to help them.

Examples of signposting and referring expected as part of the service.

- Other Age UK Services such as, information and advice, telephone shopping and housing support.
- Oasis Talk for free emotional support/counselling
- WE Care Home Improvement for housing maintenance
- Our Helpline partners, LinkAge and our Friends Ageing Better service for 'virtual social activities'. A range of activities for people that are either online or on the phone.

There may be other issues which you're not sure of and you will need to raise these with the Telephone Befriending Co-ordinator. They will be able to find the right contacts and ensure that the client is given this information.

4. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Calls are confidential and must only be made in a private or confidential space.

For home based volunteers, where possible notes and client information should be kept electronically on a password protected PC or laptop. Hard copy information should be anonymised and stored securely when not in use.

Please do not accept confidences. For instance, if a client says, "You won't tell anyone will you?" You should not agree. You should politely explain to the client that you may pass on information to your manager as per the policies of Age UK Bristol. Anything said is between the client and Age UK Bristol, not between the client and the volunteer. In doing so, you are protecting yourself and being honest with the client.

5. Information Security

You will be provided with a memory stick. Please ensure that all paperwork is saved on the memory stick which must be stored safely and securely when not in use. When updating and emailing your call logs to the co-ordinator, please only use the client reference number, and type, 'strictly private and confidential' in the subject line.

6. Boundaries

Please do not give your home or mobile telephone number to clients. If they need to contact you please ask them to call the office on 0117 929 7537 and a message will be passed on. **Please use 141 before you dial the number** and this will prevent any caller ID functions from picking up your telephone number, for example to call the office you would dial 141 0117 929 7537.

If at any time during your call you feel uncomfortable or threatened please politely inform the client that you are ending the call. Please let the Telephone Services Co-ordinator know you had to end the call and discuss what action to take.

An important part of the service is signposting clients to other activities and services. However, you are not expected to act on the client's behalf or take on direct responsibility for their care or support needs.

Examples of tasks or support not expected as part of the service.	Instead you should:-
Handling any financial or debt matters on behalf of the client.	Signpost the client to the relevant service or charity such as Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), Money Matters.
Handling any legal matters on behalf of the client.	Signpost the client to the relevant service or charity such as CAB, a legal advice centre, Age UK Bristol information and advice service
Making doctors, dentist or hospital appointments for the client.	Ask the client to make the appointment. Provide the correct telephone number if needed.
Making or handling complaints.	Signpost to the relevant complaints department.
Dealing with disputes.	Signpost to the relevant agency such CAB, Relate, Avon and Bristol Law Centre.

7. Safeguarding

If you feel that your client is in immediate danger dial call 999. Immediate danger means that the client is at risk of death or serious injury or harm.

If you have been told something by the client, heard about an inappropriate action, feel the client is being taken advantage of or neglected please call the Telephone Services Co-ordinator or the Services Manager as soon as possible to discuss your concerns. **Please do not share your concerns with the client or anyone else or try to address the situation.**

It is important that all staff and volunteers have an awareness of safeguarding and safeguarding training will be provided.

8. What to do if you can't get hold of your client

If you are unable to get hold of your client ensure this is noted on the call log and if you are unable to get hold of your client for two weeks' in a row, telephone the client's emergency contact. If you have any worries or concerns at all speak to the Telephone Befriending Co-ordinator.

If we are unable to contact the client or the emergency contact for approximately 4 weeks the Telephone Services Co-ordinator will write to the client to advise that, as we haven't been able to get hold of them, the service will be stopped and provide information on how to get back in touch.

9. What to do in an emergency

If you feel that the client is in immediate danger, in the first instance, dial 999. Immediate danger means that the client is at risk of death or serious injury or harm.

The Telephone Services Co-ordinator is contactable on:-

Name	Contact Details	Availability

The Community Services Manager is contactable on:-

Name	Contact Details	Availability

During office hours (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm) contact the main Age UK Bristol office on 0117 929 7537 and ask to speak to the duty manager.

10. Training and Support

The Telephone Services Co-ordinator will be in regular contact with you and will be available to help you in your role and answer any questions or queries you may have. Following your induction training you will have access to regular learning workshops together with any training provided by Age UK Bristol which may be relevant to your role. Please speak to the Telephone Services Co-ordinator if there is any training you think would be helpful.

11. Your Main Contacts

Name	Title	Contact Details	Availability

12. Responsibilities

AUKB's Responsibilities to you:

- Provide you with information about the volunteer role, the duties of the role and the skills and experience necessary.
- Provide you with induction, training and support so that you feel confident about carrying out your role.
- Recognise your contribution and celebrate your achievements.

- Help you to develop in your role, to take on new responsibilities when you and we feel you are ready for this, and to give you access to training opportunities.
- Provide you with a reference for jobs, training courses or other volunteering opportunities, once we know you well enough.
- Make sure you have opportunities to contribute your views about the development of the services we provide and the organisation as a whole. We will take your views into account when reviewing our activities.
- Treat you fairly, according to our Equality & Diversity Policy.

Your Responsibilities to AUKB include:

- Be reliable and punctual, and to let us know as soon as possible if you are unexpectedly unable to call your client, e.g. because of illness.
- Give us notice of any planned break from volunteering e.g. holiday
- Give notice if you intend to stop volunteering with Age UK Bristol.
- Comply with Age UK Bristol's policies and procedures, especially our policies on Confidentiality, Equality & Diversity, Data Protection and Health & Safety.
- Keep to the policies and procedures of the service(s) with which you are involved.
- Attend training and meetings as requested
- Act as an ambassador for, and support the aims of, Age UK Bristol.
- Above all, treat older people with consideration and respect.

13. Health and Safety

Volunteers and staff have a legal duty to ensure that they do not endanger themselves or others whilst in the course of their duties on behalf of Age UK Bristol.

This means that you have a responsibility to:

- Ensure your own safety.
- Not act in a way that might endanger others.
- Report to your Manager anything that might cause danger to yourself or others.

Further training on health and safety is available for volunteers as appropriate and required.

14. Guidance Notes - Making a Call

Before making a Call

The co-ordinator will provide you with a client information sheet and call log for each of your clients.

Make sure that you are in a comfortable position and that the telephone is within easy reach, without wires trailing across the floor.

Make a note of the date and time on the Call Log. Remember that the call is supposed to last approximately 20 minutes.

Calling the Client

Always start the call with: "Hello this is...first name....from Age UK Bristol's Telephone Befriending Service" and establish that the client has understood what you have said.

Speak clearly and at a comfortable pace. Give the person the opportunity to reply and listen carefully to what they have to say.

During the conversation listen out for issues where help from other agencies might be needed e.g. with physical or mental health problems, shopping, cleaning, mobility inside and outside the home, home maintenance, money worries, problems with heating / gas / electric etc.

If there is an issue or concern that the client would like more help with, make a note of it on the call log. If you are aware of a service that can help then give the relevant phone number to the client, or ask the Telephone Services Coordinator to put the information in the post.

If you don't know what help is available for a client with a particular problem, make a note of it on your call log and advise the client you will look into it.

After the Phone Call

After finishing the call complete the call log.

If the client has said that they don't require a call the following week, please record it on the call log and advise the Co-ordinator. Make a note of any referrals or enquiries on the call log and pass any referrals on to the Telephone Services So-ordinator as necessary.

If you would like to discuss any details of the call, or have any queries/concerns contact the co-ordinator.

15. Guidance Notes - Making Call Log Notes

Please ensure information is 'factual' and 'essential for purpose'.

Factual

People often understand the same conversation differently or make inaccurate assumptions and interpretations about what someone has said. Therefore, we must be careful that we record information factually and objectively.

Always take care to write down what the client has 'actually' said, rather than interpreting it. For instance you should write:

"Bob says that he is feeling down all the time".

Rather than:

"Bob was depressed"

Remember - a client is entitled to read anything that you write about them.

Essential for the Purpose

Only make a note of something on the client's call log that you feel is relevant to the task of providing a telephone befriending service. Call notes may be used as evidence and therefore should be clear, concise and contain no jargon or abbreviations.

Try to imagine that you are the next volunteer to call the client. What information would you need to know? Lots of detail is not usually necessary. If in doubt, ask the Telephone Befriending Co-ordinator.

**Thank you for volunteering with Age UK Bristol
for the benefit of older people**