

Befriending Volunteer Role Description

Role:	Befriending Volunteer
Responsible to:	Befriending Coordinator / Executive Director
Time commitment:	About 1 hour per week
Location:	Highland

Background

Befrienders Highland Limited are a small charity, founded in 1993, to support people with mental ill health who are lonely and isolated in our community. Services were later expanded to include people with memory loss and unpaid adult carers, who can also find themselves lonely and isolated, and need someone to talk to.

Our services are provided by a small team of staff, supported by a huge number of trained volunteer befrienders, located all over the Highlands. We carefully match each individual and volunteer based on common interests. Some friendships are conducted by telephone, others through email or letters, and many others are through meeting face to face for social contact, to do activities or sports together. During the Covid pandemic, we became much more flexible about our befriending models, so some friendships are now a mixture of these methods of contact, and others might involve on-line gaming, or video calling.

We aim for people to have a meaningful connection with each other, lifting people out of loneliness through the power of friendship.

Befriending will be a little different to your relationship with other friends. It will be a “supported friendship”, which means that both you (as the volunteer), and the person you are matched with (your friend) will be in regular contact with a Befriending Coordinator. This is important for us to conduct the required reviews, to provide the necessary additional information or training support, and to help resolve any problems or concerns that might arise from time to time. It is also important that we check that our befriending boundaries are being maintained, to safeguard both yourself and your friend.

Role Description

- Completing the required training modules for the type of befriending that you wish to follow; these may vary a little bit to give you more information about people with mental ill health, unpaid carers, or people with memory loss.
- Undertaking a discussion form with your named coordinator, to enable us to match you with someone that you already have something in common with.
- Undertaking a PVG check with Disclosure Scotland, and updating this every 3 years, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.
- Maintaining the principles of your signed Volunteer Agreement.
- Making regular (usually weekly) contact with your friend, either through face-to-face meetings, writing letters or emails, or making phone calls (occasionally video calls or on-line gaming if that is preferred by both parties, and agreed with the coordinator)
- Being consistent and reliable contacting, or meeting with your matched friend.
- Undertaking support and supervision calls/meetings with your nominated Befriending Coordinator, as required.
- Representing the charity in a professional manner.
- Participating in additional training, social events, fundraising activities, and other occasional group meetings, when available.

Dress Code

- No specific dress code is required.
- Please dress appropriately for the activities you are undertaking with your friend (swimming, hiking, shopping, meeting for coffee, chatting on the phone)

Skills, experience and qualities

- Friendly personality
- Personable, enthusiastic and approachable
- Reliable and consistent
- Good communicator
- Supportive, kind approach
- Empathetic and non-judgmental

The benefits to you

- Experience working with a charitable organisation
- A sense of satisfaction and pride for helping to make a valuable difference
- You will learn more about mental wellbeing, unpaid carers, and people with memory loss, including how best to offer support
- Building your self-confidence and connection to your community
- Improvements to your own mental health and wellbeing
- References for future employers
- Meet new people
- Personal development and learning

What you can expect from Befrienders Highland

- A training programme to introduce you to the charity, prepare you for your role, to help you recognise your skills and identify any ongoing support you may have.
- A designated point of contact for support and guidance, when needed.
- Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, for example, travel costs, stationary/stamps, phone calls, etc (For those who do not wish to claim expenses, claims can still be submitted as a charitable donation with Gift Aid).
- Regular contact with your Befriending Coordinator for support, supervision and troubleshooting.
- Our Wee Blether Newsletters, and postal or email correspondence from time to time, about upcoming training, events and opportunities (if you wish to receive these).
- Our coordinators will be happy to provide a reference for volunteers who have 6-months service.
- Invitation to our Annual General Meeting in the autumn, including our Long Service Volunteer Awards.

Time commitment

Usually about one hour per week, at a time and date that is mutually suitable for yourself and your friend.

After gaining some experience with befriending, some of our volunteers choose to be matched with another person, but this is not expected of all volunteers.

Recruitment Process

Complete our simple application form to express your interest in the role. We'll arrange an informal meeting or phone call to discuss your application and the role, before obtaining references. Following this, we will commence the training process, and complete PVG checks before you are matched with your befriender. This can take some time as we do our very best to match people who have things in common and who want the same type of contact (meetings, phone calls etc).

Next step

Contact us today on 01463 712791 or email info@befriendershighland.org.