

Befriender (Linked Minds)



Location

Ealing and Hounslow.

Terms

Fixed term, voluntary, 1-2 hour per week, expenses paid.

About the role

Our Linked Minds Befriending Project supports people in Ealing and Hounslow who are socially isolated because of a diagnosed mental health problem.

On completion of specialist mental health training, Befrienders are matched with someone suitable, by a coordinator who then acts as a (non-clinical) supervisor for the befriending period, which is limited to a year. Befriender, client and coordinator devise a plan together with a goal to work towards, such as getting a job, joining a club, or meeting other people.

Befrienders make a weekly 1-2 hour visit to the client's home, where they might stay in and chat over a cup of tea, go out for a walk together, visit a cafe or undertake a local activity connected with a goal. The aim is that, by the end of the year, clients feel better about themselves, more valued, resilient, empowered, more linked to their community and better equipped for their journeys in recovery.

These visits make such a difference for the client and, as a Befriender, you'll get to know inspirational people with fascinating stories, develop new skills and be part of a supportive team that values compassion and connection.

Responsible to

Linked Minds Befriending Coordinator.

Responsibilities

- Befrienders will meet up with clients for 1-2 hours each week for a year.
- Befrienders will provide companionship and build an open, trusting connection with clients.
- Befrienders will work alongside clients to help them develop ideas of how to alleviate their loneliness.
- Befrienders will encourage people to pick up old interests and discover new ones by engaging with activities in their local and wider communities.
- Befrienders will help people to find and access things in their local and wider communities.
- Befrienders will empower clients to make positive choices about what they want to do.
- Befrienders will provide written feedback to the coordinator monthly and raise any concerns or queries with the coordinator as soon as they occur.

. . . and to stand with clients on their journeys to recovery.

Candidate requirements

The abilities, qualities and skills we seek from a volunteer are:

- To be passionate about supporting individuals affected by mental health problems to achieve life-changing goals.
- To be inspiring, creative and motivational in your support.
- To be non-judgemental, genuine and empathic.
- To see beyond the diagnosis to the person.
- To help clients feel valued and valid.
- To enable clients to have hope in the future.
- To be a good listener.

Candidates will need to:

- Provide 2 character references.
- Complete an enhanced DBS check (cost covered and organised by Linked Minds). The check is carried out as part of our Safeguarding policy to protect our clients who are 'vulnerable people'. After three years the check needs to be done again. If a new DBS check has not been completed after three years and three months, the volunteer will need to pause volunteering with us until this has been completed.
- Attend a 3 hour online induction training session, a 3 hour live Induction training session (Zoom or in-person), followed by a 3 hour mental health and wellbeing training session.
- Attend 4 volunteer meetings annually (optional).
- Attend 6 monthly reviews with the coordinator.
- Be available once a week to visit their client.

Additional criteria

We welcome applications from people with lived experience, many of our volunteers will have this and helping others can be a great part of someone's own recovery journey, as well as giving them a unique insight and empathy with others.

If someone applying to be a Befriender is still under the care of psychiatric services, we would ask them to disclose this at the application stage either on the application form or in person to one of the coordinators.

The coordinators would seek a reference from a professional who's been involved in the applicants' care, asking about their suitability and readiness for the role of Befriender. This will help us to ensure the safety and support of both the Befriender and anyone they are matched with.

Additionally, we would speak to applicants about how we could best support them in their befriending role, including identifying triggers and signs of their mental ill-health.

C.H.I.M.E.

The Linked Minds Befriending Service is a recovery based service and uses 'CHIME' as proposed by the Scottish Recovery Network, as its model for intervention.

C stands for **Connections**, the connection between the Befriender and the client is key to the success of the match and sits at the centre of what we do. Their aim is to build a relationship based on honesty, trust and mutuality, where the client feels, listened to, respected and valued.

H stands for **Hope**, through their strong connection the Befriender is able to help instil hope. Hope and optimism are widely acknowledged as being key to recovery.

I stands for **Identity**. Many people feel they lose their identity following a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Befriending can help a person regain a positive sense of themselves and can help them to find an identity incorporating all of the elements that go to make them who they are.

M stands for **Meaning**. We all find meaning and purpose in different things, some people find it in work or learning, others being active in the communities, and others in helping other people. Befrienders can help their clients explore and find what is meaningful to them.

E stands for **Empowerment**. In all we do we hope to empower clients to take control of their own lives. Our matches last for a year and in that time we will work with clients to identify their strengths and take personal responsibility for their choices.

hello@befriend.london +44 20 3093 1130

Boundary House, Boston Road, London, W7 2QE
Registered charity no: 1072538

<https://befriend.london/>