



Volunteer Telephone Befriender Handbook

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer telephone befriender. In the handbook you will find more about Staying Well, 'what to expect' as a volunteer, the volunteer role description, some FAQ's and some useful links

"I have thoroughly enjoyed both of my befriending engagements. I feel I made a difference to both of the people I call or called on a weekly basis."



"I've found that I've been able to make a positive difference to the people I've been matched with, and that we've become friends."

ABOUT STAYING WELL

Staying Well work with individuals and communities to help people feel less lonely and isolated. We link people together and help everyone live happier and healthier lives; for longer.

Staying Well work with individuals to support them to discover new things in their local area and make that first step out of the door. Volunteer telephone befriending is a big part of what we offer at Staying Well. We created the scheme in 2020 to help people during the covid-19 pandemic, and it has gone from strength to strength since then.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Now that you have shown interest in becoming a volunteer telephone befriender, what can you expect of the process from here?

Firstly, expect to feel really, really good! By volunteering you are not only helping others, but you are helping yourself. Expect feelings of happiness, contentment and warmth.

Staying Well require a certain commitment from their volunteers, and initially we ask **for at least 6 months commitment of up to 1 hour per week**. If you are unable to offer this, please let the volunteer co-ordinator know and we can hopefully suggest alternative options for volunteering.

We have attached an **application form** to fill in along with a **volunteer role description**. This includes giving us details of **two references** and permission to submit for a **DBS check**.

Once we have received your application form back and sent off for your references, we will ask you to attend a **short interview**. The interview gives you chance to speak to the volunteer co-ordinator and for us to explain what the role involves.

TRAINING

Once the volunteer co-ordinator has received both references, DBS check and completed the interview process you will be given the next available date for **training**. The training will

include **safeguarding, confidentiality, lone working, forming boundaries** as a volunteer and much more. Successful completion and engagement of the training forms part of the decision-making process.

MATCHING

The matching process is done by the volunteer co-ordinator and used information given by both parties on interests and hobbies. Once the match has been agreed, both parties will be required to sign a **befriending agreement**. The befriending agreement outlines the expectations from all parties (befriender, befriender and Staying Well).

ONGOING SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND MONITORING

Staying Well will be in regular contact during your time as a volunteer telephone befriender. This will involve a catch up after your first call with your befriender, **one** month after and then at **5** months. The 'catch up's' can be done via phone, zoom, teams and will involve talking about the match, how you are finding volunteering and whether you need any additional support.

You will also have access to contact numbers in case of emergency.

ENDING THE MATCH

All people find endings of a relationship difficult to cope with because of the range of emotions we experience (such as regret, loss, sadness, a feeling of rejection etc). The best outcome would be for yourself and the befriender to be able to look back on the relationship and remember the **fun and constructive support**.

Staying Well believes that endings should be **planned** to give all parties sufficient time to deal with their feelings. We hope to avoid abrupt endings as these can lead the befriender to have feelings of rejection and abandonment. We ask for a **minimum of 6 weeks' notice** if possible if you wish to end the match prior to the 6 month ending.

Please do not feel guilty when it is time for you to move on, it will be recognised and appreciated that you have already given your time and effort to support a befriender.

The volunteer co-ordinator will endeavour to offer support to both parties. Once the befriending relationship does end, Staying Well will no longer be accountable for the relationship. If you plan to stay in touch with a befriender once the match has finished, you must consider the appropriateness of your contact, why you want to maintain contact, and be aware that you no longer have the policies & procedures of the organisation in place to cushion your relationship.

VOLUNTEER TELEPHONE BEFRIENDER ROLE DESCRIPTION

Role Title: Telephone Befriender	Responsible to: Telephone Befriending Coordinator
Where (Location):	To provide 1:1 Befriending to an allocated person on the telephone within Calderdale
Time commitment:	Up to 1 hour per week
Role:	To befriend an adult; to improve their self-confidence, emotional health and wellbeing, reducing their social isolation and promote their independence.
Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To telephone a person with whom you have been matched, building a relationship of friendship and trust • To give the person some company and/or encourage them to get out and about or pursue a leisure interest for example • To participate in regular supervision with the Befriending Coordinator • To liaise, at times, with Staying Well • To uphold Staying Well's core principles, vision, culture and values and abide by the policies and procedures as per the volunteer handbook
Qualities and Skills required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be reliable and have a genuine interest in the desire to make a difference in the lives of people faced with loneliness and isolation • Good communication skills • Patience and a warm and friendly attitude • To live in Calderdale
Training and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be required to attend the Befriending Induction training and participate in further training and/or networking events which may be offered. • Ongoing support and supervision will be given by the Telephone Befriending coordinator either in person or via Teams/telephone. • Regular reviews will take place and an opportunity given for peer support through networking events with other Befrienders • Regular newsletters, updates and news from the Befriending Service will be sent to you by email
Any other Requirements	Due to the vulnerable nature of the people we support we will require two references and also a DBS check. Further details will be discussed with you at recruitment.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a 'Telephone Befriending Volunteer'?	A Telephone 'Befriender' is someone who calls a specific named person at a regular time, normally weekly, to have a friendly conversation. The purpose is to help reduce isolation and loneliness in the person receiving the call. For some people this telephone call may be the only conversation they'll have that week so as a volunteer you are providing a valuable service.
What skills do I need to be a Telephone Befriender?	You don't need any specialist skills to do this but you do need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the time • Have patience, empathy and be friendly • Have common sense • Be comfortable using the telephone • Be good at chatting and a good listener • Have a positive outlook and a good sense of humour • Be able to call from your own telephone.
Can anyone be a Telephone Befriender?	At present we ask that our volunteers must be over 18 but there's no upper age limit.
Who will cover the cost of the calls?	Most telephone contracts and SIMs cover unlimited numbers of calls, so calls can be made from your own phone and SIM without any additional cost to you. If you are not sure, check with your provider.
How long will I be on the phone for?	Ideally between 15 minutes to an hour (maximum). If you find calls are shorter or longer than this, speak to the Staying Well team – it may be your person needs a different kind of support.
When should I call?	Calls should be made on any day of the week from 9am to 8pm – and be at a time best for you both. However, if it's better for you both to call outside of these hours, please let the Staying Well team know.
Who will I be calling?	You will be calling someone who has requested telephone support from Staying Well. The person will know that you are going to call so the call shouldn't be unexpected. Some Staying Well clients may have some additional needs like hearing or memory issues. Your Staying Well contact will talk to you about anything you need to be aware of.
Is there anything I	Telephone Befrienders aren't calling to offer counselling , and not to give

<p>shouldn't talk about?</p>	<p>medical or financial advice. It's also not acceptable to use the calls to influence people's religious, political or ideological beliefs (even if you have strong feelings about the benefit of such subjects).</p>
<p>Where should I make the call from?</p>	<p>Where possible a quiet space in your own home is best where you won't be disturbed by others and can give the person your full attention. The content of the calls are between you and the person you are contacting so don't share the information or personal details with anyone else.</p> <p>All Staying Well clients and telephone befrienders are Calderdale based.</p>
<p>Should I give out my phone number?</p>	<p>Your privacy is important to us – we will not share your number and would prefer you didn't either. If you feel you want to share your number, please talk to the Staying Well Team first.</p> <p>Hiding your number before you call.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a landline dial 141 and then the number. • From an Android device go to 'phone', press the vertical 3 dots for a drop down menu and select 'settings', select 'supplementary services', select 'showing caller ID' and click 'hide my number'. • From an Apple device go to 'settings', select 'phone', select 'show my caller ID', slide the circle to the left to hide number.
<p>What if I can't make a call for a while, eg. if I get ill?</p>	<p>Please let the Staying Well Team know as soon as possible so that they can make other arrangements if necessary.</p>
<p>What if the person I'm befriending doesn't pick up the phone?</p>	<p>Please try again after a few minutes. If no one picks up after you've tried three times, let the Staying Well team know. They may suggest you call on another day or that you leave it till the following week. Staying Well will follow up to make sure your person is ok.</p>
<p>What should I do if my person starts talking about something I'm not comfortable with?</p>	<p>If the subject of a conversation makes you feel uncomfortable, let your person know and suggest a different line of conversation.</p> <p>If the befriender continues to make you feel uncomfortable please end the call and let Staying Well know ASAP.</p>
<p>What should I do if my person becomes upset?</p>	<p>If your person becomes tearful, that's ok and it is unlikely to be because of something you said.</p> <p>Don't feel that you have to say something to fix things.</p> <p>The most important thing is that you are there and are listening.</p>

	<p>Sympathise with their feelings and, if appropriate and you want to, you could share a little of what you're feeling too.</p>
<p>What should I do if I become concerned about my person's safety and/or wellbeing?</p>	<p>If you are concerned about you person's safety due to someone in their home or elsewhere being a danger to them, inform the Staying Well Team as soon as you're off the call.</p> <p>If your concerns are about someone's self-care (either physically or mentally) let the Staying Well team know as soon as you're off the call. You can tell them about services that are available to them, including their local GP, A&E and community mental health support (e.g. Healthy Minds).</p> <p>If you are concerned that someone may be at risk of harming themselves let the Staying Well team know as soon as you're off the call. Remember it's ok to ask questions. You might be worried that asking questions might make them feel worse but people often find it helpful to talk to someone.</p>
<p>What happens if my person is ill, or there is some kind of emergency, whilst I am calling?</p>	<p>If you think someone has had a serious accident or there is a medical emergency while you are on a call, you should contact 999 immediately. Please also contact the Staying Well Team as they may have more information that will be useful for care/emergency services.</p>
<p>What happens if I want to, or need to stop befriending?</p>	<p>We understand that people's circumstances change over time. We have an ending policy in place to ensure that both the befriender and befriended feel as happy and comfortable with the ending as possible.</p>
<p>Who can I talk to?</p>	<p>Telephone befriending can be emotionally demanding and you may find that you need to 'offload' too from time to time. It's very important that you continue to respect confidentiality. People will not trust you if you gossip about them or share their personal information with others.</p> <p>As a Staying Well Volunteer you will have a direct phone number to talk to the volunteer co-ordinator.</p> <p>Alternatively, Peer 2 Peer – Listening Ear is a service open 7 days a week from 8am – 8pm on 01422 392111..</p>

KEY CONTACTS

We would always advise you contact the Staying Well Team if you had any concerns about the person you are befriending. You can do this by contacting the volunteer co-ordinator. Alternatively, you can call (01422 393767) or email (stayingwellproject@calderdale.gov.uk) Staying Well.

Volunteer Co-Ordinator Contact Details:

PHONE: 07825089288

EMAIL: Rachel.downey@nhpltd.org.uk

WEBSITE: www.stayingwellhub.com

FACEBOOK: @staying_well_team

TWITTER: @stayingwellcal

INSTA: @stayingwellcal

However, in the event of an emergency we include the numbers below which outline further support available in Calderdale for those in need or crisis.

Gateway to Care	01422 393000
Multi Agency Safeguarding Team	01422 393336
NHS mental health services	01422 222802

Calderdale (Out of hours emergency number)	01422 288000
Samaritans	116 123
NHS support	111