

Face to Face Befriender Volunteer Role Description

Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations

Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh

Overview of Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations

Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations (SLCVO) support third sector groups, people and public bodies to make a difference in their communities by:

- Delivering and developing Third Sector Interface Services on behalf of the Highland Third Sector Interface in Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross
- Delivering and developing voluntary befriending services in Skye and Lochalsh (Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh)

For more information see www.slcvo.org.uk and www.befriendersskyeandlochalsh.com

Overview of Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh Service

Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh is a voluntary befriending service run by SLCVO. The service is open to adults living in Skye and Lochalsh affected by social isolation or loneliness. Working in partnership with Highland Hospice the service provides range of volunteering opportunities including:

- Face to face Befriending
- Telephone Befriending
- Hospital Befriending at Broadford Hospital
- After Discharge Befriending
- Events and Fundraising volunteer

Role Overview - Face to Face Befriending

Face to face Befriending usually takes the form of a visit every two weeks in a person's home, or supporting activities out-with their home such as a visit to a café, going for a walk or attending a community group. By becoming a volunteer befriender with Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh, you will help build reliable relationships that give people an opportunity to reconnect with others and their community.

The Benefits of Becoming a Volunteer Befriender

Studies show that there are many positive benefits becoming a volunteer befriender, such as: making a positive difference in someone's life; you may improve your own social skill and you may feel your confidence grow. You will also be part of SLCVO's befrienders team who are supported by the volunteer coordinator who will ensure you have a good volunteering experience.

Role Location

As a Face-to-Face Volunteer Befriender you will meet In a person's home, or support other activities out-with a clients home, depending on need.

Time Commitment

Face to Face Befriending can be flexible depending on the needs of the client but usually, a regular time and day would be agreed on. As minimum visits take place for 1 to 2 hours every fortnight.

We ask for a minimum of 6 months as an active volunteer however, we recognise that this is an entirely voluntary role and volunteers are of course free to stop when they choose. Although there is no maximum time for a befriender volunteer, we check with both the client and volunteer every 6 months to ensure the service is still suitable.

Main Activities

Befriending relationships can vary in duration and activity. Commonly, befriending relationships will involve:

- Spending time chatting and listening to a person
- Participating in activities such as reading, playing cards and puzzles
- Helping a person engage in new activities.
- Supporting hobbies
- Helping people to make new or build connections in their community
- A volunteer befriender does not undertake housekeeping tasks, personal care or advocacy and counselling support.

Responsibilities and Duties

Direct contact with a befriender is, of course, the most important part of being a befriender however, there are responsibilities and duties which volunteer befrienders need to meet to ensure they are carrying out their role properly. Volunteers Must:

- actively participate in the training and preparation to become a befriender
- meet with the befriender as agreed
- work within the policy and practice framework of organisation
- attend training and support meetings
- maintain the appropriate boundaries within the befriending relationship
- alert the coordinator about any problems or about issues beyond their remit
- complete any paperwork required by the organisation
- treat all befrienders with dignity and respect

Support and Supervision

The befriending coordinator is responsible for the support and supervision of volunteers and clients through a combination of 1:1 sessions, group meetings and ongoing training opportunities. As the primary contact for volunteers and clients the co-ordinator manages the recruitment/referral, training and matching process. They also support the client and volunteer in the ongoing befriending relationship and are responsible for managing any problems or issues .

The on-line volunteer management software 'Better Impact' is used to manage volunteer profiles, track activity, deliver training and access policies and other documents. It is also used to report on befriending visits and manage befriender and client connections.

If a volunteer would like to discuss any aspect of their role or befriending relationship with someone other than the service co-ordinator they can contact SLCVO's Chief Officer Jo Ford on jo.ford@slcvo.org.uk or a board member on trustees@slcvo.org.uk

Volunteer qualities and characteristics

There are many qualities and characteristics that create a strong and valuable befriender. Some of these desired factors include:

- A warm, friendly and caring manner
- Patience, empathy and understanding of service user/client group
- Ability to approach new people without prejudice
- Clear sense of personal boundaries and confidentiality
- Commitment and reliability
- Strong listening skills
- Professional approach to working with the organisation
- Understanding the importance of confidentiality and following procedures
- Willing to undertake training and development

Recruitment Process

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer must complete a Befriending Volunteer Application form available on-line <http://bttr.im/13dlz>, by email or printed. On receipt of a complete application form the co-Ordinator will phone you to discuss your application. During this call an induction meeting will be arranged where all relevant PVG, volunteering and insurance paperwork is completed.

During the induction meeting you will be given access to the Better Impact online management and training system and while waiting for the PVG paperwork and references to be returned (around 6 weeks) you can start your online training.

On successful completion of the online training and return of PVG and references you will be invited to meet with a client. The co-ordinator or experienced volunteer will be at this first client meeting and if both parties agree it is a good match we will update Better Impact so you are able to report on your sessions.

If during the recruitment process you decide befriending volunteering is not for you or you are unable to commence training the Co-ordinator will, if requested, refer you to SLCVO's Development officer to look at other volunteering opportunities.

Training and support

All volunteers will receive training before starting their role and will be supported and supervised by the Befriending Skye and Lochalsh Co-ordinator. Training is delivered through a combination of in-person sessions and on-line modules using SLCVO's Better Impact volunteer management system. Training has been developed in conjunction with Highland Hospice and the Befrienders Network

Training includes:

- Induction session

- Better Impact on-line modules including:
 - Being a befriender.
 - Boundaries and confidentiality:
 - Communication skills
 - Health and Safety
 - How to perform a risk assessment
 - Managing Endings
 - Safeguarding
 - The Matching Process
 - Understanding Marginalisation

- Printed documents
 - Befriender Skye and Lochalsh Volunteer handbook
 - Befrienders Network “Protecting your wellbeing guide for volunteers”
- 1:1 support and supervision meetings every 6 months
- Ad-hoc training to meet client needs

On-going training will be identified through regular support and supervision sessions with the befriending co-ordinator.

Where training is required for a clients specific need we will work with other organisations such as Alzheimer Scotland who will provide enhance befriender training.

Managing Endings

At some point, for one reason or another, all befriending relationships come to an end, i.e., someone moves away; The service user feels positive and no longer needs the service; The organisation feels the match has matured into friendship or the volunteer may want to step back from their role.

We understand that the ending of a befriending relationship may generate challenges, there could be feelings to deal with, adjustments to make and obstacles to overcome. Every month volunteers are asked to submit an update on their interactions with the client, and clients are contact every 6 months to check how they feel about the service. If the coordinator is made aware of changes that may end the service we will work with the volunteer and client to ensure the ending is planned and supported.

Volunteer befrienders are asked to provide a months’ notice if discontinuing their role volunteer however, we recognise that this is an entirely voluntary role and volunteers are of course free to stop when they choose

Some ending may be sudden due to a number of reasons in this situation we will offer the appropriate support.

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