



The No. 1 **Be-friending** Agency

ROLE DESCRIPTION

VOLUNTEER BEFRIENDER

This role provides the opportunity to become part of the dynamic team at the No.1 Be-friending Agency and make a significant contribution to reducing loneliness and isolation. The Volunteer Befriender will work with the people we support, their families and partner agencies to deliver a caring service that meets individual needs and aspirations in a person-centred way.

As a Volunteer Befriender you will visit an older person, typically over the age of 65, who requires social support at home. During these weekly visits, lasting between one and two hours, you will engage, stimulate and support your befriender, encouraging him or her to be as independent as possible. You will offer warm companionship and, at a minimum, active listening and conversation. You may also provide a measure of practical support by, for example, helping arrange appointments, activities and outings; assisting with walking (lending an arm); organising mail and writing letters; accompanying to social events and appointments.

Befriending is unique and distinct from other services. **Research points to a number of key benefits for older people**, including: they feel life is worth living; they feel they are not forgotten and they belong; they know they have a friend who cares, who is not family; they feel less lonely and less anxious; they no longer feel a burden to society; their emotional and physical health is improved.

However, as a Volunteer Befriender you will not only transform the life of the person you will assist. Research indicates that volunteering in general, and befriending in particular **transforms the lives of those who assist as well**. Volunteers live longer, happier lives, as a number of physical and psychological health indicators are significantly better in volunteers than non-volunteers. Furthermore, volunteering provides experience and builds skills which are valuable to employers: a recent survey shows that **volunteers are on average 27% more likely to find employment than non-volunteers**.

With the No.1 Be-friending Agency you will join a team of extraordinary people, who are really committed to providing the best possible support to all

users of our services. **You will therefore benefit from training and on-going skills development, as well as friendly, professional support by our Volunteer Coordinators.**

The successful Volunteer Befriender:

- Is trustworthy
- Has a well-balanced personality
- Is responsible
- Communicates easily with different people
- Is patient
- Is resourceful
- Tolerates frustration and disappointment
- Truly cares about others
- Honours commitments
- Is well organised
- Is generally on time and rarely misses appointments

As a Volunteer befriender, we expect you to commit to a **minimum of two hours weekly** (one for the befriending session and one in order to get to/from the befriender) **for a period of at least 8 weeks**, ideally longer. By your own decision, in agreement with the befriender, you may extend the befriending session to one and a half or two hours. You can claim back any out-of-pocket travel expenses. This remains a volunteer position, however, and you are not bound by “contractual” obligations – if your personal circumstances will change, or if you will realise that befriending is not for you, **you will be able to stop at any time.**