

## Befriending Volunteering - FAQ

<b>How long can I volunteer for?</b>	Volunteering should fit around your lifestyle and our Befriending Volunteers have supported clients for six months, a year, or even many years. On our volunteer application form, you can specify your initial level of commitment.
<b>When can I volunteer?</b>	<p><b>Telephone befriending</b> – Monday – Sunday (9am – 7pm)</p> <p><b>Face to face befriending</b> – Monday – Sunday (9am - 6pm)</p> <p>On the application form, you can list if you'd prefer to volunteer in the morning or afternoon on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis.</p> <p>Most clients are looking for support during the week, but we do have a few clients that are open to weekend visits. After the Befriending induction, you can let the coordinator know your preferred day and time to volunteer.</p> <p>If you're volunteering out of office hours and something happens, you can call our safeguarding lead for volunteers.</p>
<b>Has a Wimbledon Guild staff member visited the client's home before my first visit with them?</b>	Before any volunteer visit, our Befriending Coordinators complete a home assessment and risk assessment. They also talk with the client's carer, external organisations, or family members involved in their care. We make sure to match volunteers only with clients we feel comfortable supporting and we would never send a volunteer into an unsafe environment.
<b>Will the client I'm supporting have my phone number?</b>	Not at all. We ask all our Befriending Volunteers to dial 141 before the client's phone number. This ensures your number appears as a 'private number' on the client's phone. We request that volunteers do not exchange numbers with clients to maintain boundaries and make sure you aren't contacted outside your volunteering hours.
<b>Can I change the day I meet my client and volunteer?</b>	Yes of course, you can change the day and time you meet your client and volunteer. We simply ask that you inform your designated point of contact so we can double check the client is happy with the change and to update our system. While our clients appreciate continuity and consistency, making occasional changes to the scheduled date and time is perfectly fine.

**Can I stop volunteering at any time?** Yes, you can. We do ask that you give us as much notice as possible so we can inform the client and discuss the next steps. Whenever possible, we aim to phase out the exit over four weeks.

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**Will I be visiting the client on my own?** Yes, you will be. On your first visit the Befriending Coordinator will come with you. If you or the client would like to attend a second visit with the Befriending Coordinator, that can be arranged.

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**Can I still be a Befriending Volunteer if I don't want to visit someone in their home?** Certainly! Some clients want to boost their confidence by getting out in the community and meet in places such as parks, libraries, or our HomeFood Café. While a few volunteers prefer telephone befriending, many people prefer meeting face-to-face. If you want to meet someone in the community, you would be volunteering under the project Connect & Befriend.

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**If I stop volunteering, what happens to the client?** It's natural to feel hesitant about stopping your volunteering, but it's important not to feel guilty. Your Befriending Coordinator will assist your client as they return to the waiting list for another volunteer match.

Sometimes, clients may also leave the befriending programme to move closer to family, transition to a care home, gain independence, or sadly pass away.

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**What support is available when I decide to stop volunteering?** Your Befriending Coordinator will be on hand to help by giving advice on what to say to your client, and you can either choose to tell the client yourself or we can tell them for you.

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**Can I meet the client before committing?** Absolutely. Your Befriending Coordinator will attend a first visit with you at the client's home or in an agreed community location. After the visit, we'll check in with you and the client to see if you'd both like to continue meeting.

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**What happens if I meet the client, but we don't get on?** If you and your client don't connect right away, let your Befriending Coordinator know your concerns. We'll either find a better match for you both or provide tips to help you both build a stronger bond, whichever you prefer.

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**How do I travel to visit my client?** You can travel to your client on foot, public transport or by using your car. We have a safeguarding and lone working policy, and you can claim travel expenses of up to £5 per visit.

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<b>How far will I have to travel to visit my client?</b>	Just let us know – we would never ask you to travel for longer than you wish to. We always try and match Befriending Volunteers with a client within a 30-minute travel distance.
<b>Can I claim expenses if I use public transport?</b>	You can claim up to £5 per visit. Just keep your receipt or let us know the mileage to get your expenses reimbursed by bank transfer.
<b>What type of clients will I be matched with?</b>	We work with volunteers to find suitable matches for our clients. Our clients are diverse, and we only accept referrals that meet our Befriending criteria, which can be found online.
<b>What happens if a client becomes reliant on me or breaks the boundaries in place?</b>	Befriending Volunteers don't replace counsellors or carers, so we put clear boundaries in place to stop clients becoming too reliant on their volunteer.
<b>What happens if a client oversteps a boundary or makes me feel uncomfortable?</b>	Making sure everyone feels comfortable is important to us. If a client makes you feel uncomfortable, always report this to your Befriending Coordinator and we will jointly agree on next steps with you.
<b>If I want to visit the client more, can I do that?</b>	Boundaries are important. So, befriending clients and volunteers usually do not meet more than once a week. Please talk to the befriending team if you feel as though your client may need additional support.