



Befriending

FiSH offers a one-to-one befriending scheme for people who, for whatever reason, may be feeling lonely or isolated. Both face-to-face visiting and telephone befriending are offered depending on individual requirements.

Visiting Befriending takes the form of weekly or fortnightly home visits by a volunteer to talk and listen. The volunteer will take the time to build up a friendship undistracted by other tasks and this enables them to give their undivided attention with an emphasis on listening. However, for some clients, visits may also include specific tasks such as reading the post or aiding mobility by going for walk. There will be clear boundaries in a befriending relationship for both the volunteer and the befriender to aid a safe and comfortable environment within which the befriending relationship and friendship can develop.

Telephone befriending involves making a regular call to a befriender; listening and talking to them - and hopefully laughing with them. For some people befrienders may be the only person they have talked to that day. Making a difference to someone's life with a simple regular telephone call or by visiting them is particularly important for older people who may be housebound, feel isolated, have limited social contact or just want someone to talk to.

People requiring befriending are often referred to us by GPs, social services and other care organisations, whilst others approach us directly asking if we can help them. With the number of older people rising, the aim of befriending is to enhance quality of life and combat social isolation. Befriending can improve both the physical health and mental wellbeing of older people - which is why we need more volunteers to join our team. For visiting befrienders we can 'match' you with a befriender in an area to suit you. Time and commitment is according to your availability. For telephone befriending you can ring from home. No formal qualifications are expected. Training and support is given.

If you know of someone who might benefit from this service, or if you would like to find out more about it for yourself, please contact us. Initially you will meet with a member of the befriending team to discuss how FiSH can help.

If you would like to find out more about FiSH Befriending please call 020 8878 8100 or email befriending@fishhelp.org.uk.