



Befriending Information Pack

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Induction

Introduction to Ponthafren Association and the project

What is befriending?

- Boundaries do's and don'ts
- Confidentiality
- Commitment
- Respect
- Enabling to make own choices
- Differences between friendship and relationship
- What are vulnerable adults
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Training

1. Mental health awareness
2. POVA
3. Moving and handling to include PATS and H&S

Welcome

Ponthafren Association is a registered charity, catering for people who experience mental health issues, those who may be socially isolated or excluded, or those who may just wish to make new friends or gain new skills. We serve the community in and around the very rural area of North Powys.

Project Aim

The aims of the project is to reduce social isolation of people aged 18-50 with mental health issues, improving their social networks and maintain/improve confidence

Project Objectives

- Deliver a countywide befriending project that is of consistent high quality
- Establish a Powys network of volunteer befrienders by recruiting and training 48 befrienders in geographical communities across North Powys
- Match volunteer befrienders to 84 clients, offering individual and group activities and emotional support (including telephone and internet support)
- Coordinate the service delivery with primary care services available from voluntary and statutory agencies

Ponthafren 'In Safe Hands' Befriending Project is a service within Ponthafren Association consisting of an arranged relationship between a volunteer and a client which is supported and monitored by Ponthafren Association staff.

The volunteer and the client come together with the aim of establishing and developing an informal and social relationship which is non-judgemental, mutual, purposeful and confidential, and with a commitment over time.

People who have become isolated because of ill health, disability, life changes or social disadvantage can be helped through a supportive reliable relationship which builds self-confidence and seeks to reconnect them with their community.

Volunteers will be recruited, interviewed and will have undertaken an enhanced DBS check and training before any contact is made with a client. Clients will have been interviewed and assessed by the relevant Befriender Coordinator prior to volunteer allocation.

What is befriending?

Befriending is a process whereby two or more people come together with the aim of establishing an informal social relationship. Befriending is a service consisting of a relationship between a volunteer and a client which is initiated, supported and monitored by a Befriender Coordinator.

Befriending can be used as an effective intervention to support people with complex health and social care needs, challenging the misconception that befriending is simply a low level intervention

Befriending can help improve the health and wellbeing outcomes if used as an early intervention to aid re-ablement and build resilience, which in turn may reduce future dependency on more costly health and social care services.

Befriending can play a significant role in helping to create social care environment that can help local authorities and their partners achieve the total transformation of adult social care within localities.

What a volunteer is not

- A medical professional
- A social/support worker
- A taxi service
- A counsellor
- A cook or cleaner
- Judgemental
- Forever

What a volunteer is

- A friendly face
- A listening ear
- Someone who offers understanding
- Reassuring
- Someone who encourages self confidence

People who have become isolated because of ill health, disability, life changes or social disadvantage can be helped through a supportive reliable relationship which builds self-confidence and seeks to reconnect them with their community.

Desirable qualities of a volunteer

- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Approachable
- Empathy
- Good listening skills

The benefits for volunteers

- An open mind and flexible attitude
- Is supportive without being controlling
- Has realistic expectation of themselves
- A genuine desire to help others

Volunteers get satisfaction from making a significant impact on the ability of another person to cope with and enjoy life. They have the opportunity to observe the other person grow, to develop self-confidence and independence. For some, the opportunity will allow the volunteer to gain valuable experience and training. Above all, volunteering allows people the chance to feel useful and enjoy the company of the people they visit.

Boundaries and do's and don'ts

Personal

- See the person and not the behaviour
- Maintain your respect for the other person
- Follow your instinct
- Do not feel that you have failed if the befriending relationship does not work out

Emotional

- Try to understand the other clients thoughts and feelings
- Remember you may not understand the situation when you only see part of it
- Even if you have had a similar problem you may not understand their difficulties
- Everyone has different ways of coping, yours may not be right for the client

Organisational

- It is both your right and responsibility to accept support from the organisation
- Only work within the guidelines of the project and your given role
- You must follow the projects policies

Do

- Be aware of your personal boundaries
- Stay safe
- Listen to your gut feeling
- Avoid getting into situations where they could be mis-represented
- Think before you say yes
- Remember that the main focus of the relationship is the need of the client
- Be prepared to listen and let the person talk
- Observe confidentiality at all times
- Let the Befriender Co-ordinator know if you have to cancel a visit
- Keep to set days and times for visits unless discussed with the Befriender Co-ordinator
- Be helpful and sensitive
- Inform the Befriender Co-ordinator of any concerns or incidents such as behaviours or deteriorating health
- Respect the client as an individual

Don't

- Give out your home phone number or your address
- Take the client to your own home
- Get emotionally involved
- Give, accept or lend money or other items to/from the client
- Handle clients' money
- Help or administer medication

Confidentiality Statement

Confidentiality is critical for a successful relationship and should be discussed at the start of the relationship. Trust and effective befriending can only be fostered if participants are confident that what they disclose is confidential.

- All clients will be aware that it may be necessary to share information with other organisation or in house and will be asked to confirm that consent through a client agreement.
- All information regarding the user will be stored securely
- Confidentiality is with the organisation not with the individual.
- Confidentiality must never be confused with secrecy
- Decisions to share information must be made by the manager not the volunteer
- Contact the Befriender Coordinator if you have any concerns
- Information will only be shared on a need to know basis when there is a serious risk to the user or when not acting on information would increase the risk to the user.
- Informed consent should be obtained, but if this is not possible and others are at risk it may be necessary to override this requirement
- If confidentiality is broken a full record will be kept of who decided and why the decision was taken.

Commitment

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is undertaken without the concern for financial gain. Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship. Your clients' needs will determine the commitment and length of time you spend with them; however we envisage that between 2-3 hours a week for a maximum of 12 months and would hope that you give that commitment.

Respect

Human rights embody a requirement that people be treated with fairness, respect, equality and dignity. This means ensuring that your actions are fair, taking account of individual circumstances and the views of clients, and balancing respect and dignity for each individual with competing demands from others. The concept of dignity is key to achieving meaningful equality for older people, in a way that is not possible simply by prohibiting discrimination.

Enabling to make own choices

Befriending is not a replacement for care nor should it create a dependency. Befriending is about re-enablement which allows the client to make their own decisions in order to gain independence and expand their opportunities.

Difference between friendships and relationships

Befriending is valued in different ways by clients and volunteer befrienders. Clients regard the befriender as their 'friend' and appreciate the different leisure opportunities befriending can bring. Volunteers enjoy the relationship but see differences between befriending and 'friendship'. In particular, it is not necessarily a reciprocal relationship and they feel a sense of responsibility to see the client regularly and for a particular purpose for a limited time. A friendship may well develop after the befriending has ceased.

What are vulnerable adults?

A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

The definitions may include a person who:

- Has learning difficulties
- Has mental health problems, including dementia
- Is an older person with support/care needs
- Is physically frail or has a chronic illness.
- Has a sensory or physical disability
- Misuses drugs or alcohol
- Has social or emotional problems
- Has an autistic disorder

What can the clients expect from us?

The volunteer will support the client to access social, leisure, educational or other needs and will promote personal choice, increase self-respect, support existing personal skills and support the development of new opportunities. They will visit the user in their own home or in the community to provide companionship and support. The befriender is not a medical professional, social or support worker, a taxi service or counsellor or advocate. The volunteer will receive on-going support and supervision and the project is closely monitored.

Working with equality and diversity statement

Equality is about creating a fairer society, where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential by eliminating prejudice and discrimination. We can deliver services that are personal, fair and diverse and a society that is healthier and happier.

Diversity literally means difference. When it is used as a contrast or addition to equality, it is about recognising individual as well as group differences, treating people as individuals, and placing positive value on diversity in the community and in the workforce that are personal, fair and diverse and a society that is healthier and happier.

Dealing with conflict

Conflict arises because of:

- different values and attitudes
- trying to achieve different objectives
- a lack of common vision of what needs doing and how it should be done
- different priorities
- competition – for resources or for power

In many disputes the informal stage is the first stage as many conflicts can be sorted by simply talking and listening. Giving people the time and space to express their feelings and concerns can often help to clear the air.

If this does not work we suggest that the complainant contacts the member of staff to see if the problem can be resolved to their satisfaction. Ponthafren staff will do everything they can to put things right, including reviewing procedures to stop problems happening again.

What are the typical responses to conflict?

Fight - you react in a challenging way. At work this may mean shouting or losing your temper.

Flight - you turn your back on what's going on. This is a common reaction - by ignoring a problem you hope it will go away.

Freeze - you are not sure how to react and become very passive. You might begin to deal with the issue but things drift or become drawn out through indecision.

Face - Approach a problem in a calm and rational way with a planned approach.

What will I do?

As a one to one volunteer you will meet with the client once a week for an hour or two for up to 1 year. The activities will range from in the home to accompanying the client to social activities, going on walks or on the bus, participating in hobbies and interests. By participating in activities that support people through times of change, help the client to take on new challenges and opportunities. This will result in increased confidence and self-esteem, improved physical and mental wellbeing and maintaining independence. Group volunteers help at social groups, encouraging interaction between clients, assisting less abled with practical issues and helping them to get to the group offering lifts etc.

Ponthafren 'In Safe Hands' Befriending Project seek to have a diverse range of volunteers in order to make an appropriate and relevant match for each individual client. The Befriender Coordinator is responsible for assessing and matching each volunteer and client from their referral form and volunteer application form information. The information from these including hobbies, likes, dislikes and location will be used to best match, this may take some time but will keep in contact during this period. If a client or volunteer is not happy with their match then they have the ability to let the staff know after the 3 way meeting or further on in the match if they so wish, although if possible we would like 2 weeks' notice. The Befriending Coordinator will communicate this to either party or commence the process to find new matches for both.

First stage

Clients and volunteers are asked during their assessment meeting to identify what sort of person would be most and least suitable. It is this that forms the first stage of matching e.g. age, gender, ethnic background, previous experience, current lifestyles, values and time availability.

Second stage

When the above considerations have been made the matching process is continued by assessing the following:

Personal backgrounds and experiences

Has the volunteer got the kind of background that the client has asked for e.g. new to the area, widowed, a formal education, experience of other countries and cultures, class background or a background similar to their own?

Work experiences

Has the volunteer got the kind of background the client could benefit from? This may be work experience that the client has expressed an interest in or have they previously worked in similar fields.

Interest/hobbies

Has the volunteer got similar interests to the client or previous interests in areas that the client could benefit from e.g. leisure activities, current affairs or music?

Approach

Has the volunteer got the kind of approach or personality that the client could respond or relate to e.g. dynamic, quiet, high/low energy level, easy going or formal?

When the above points have been considered the Befriender team staff member will communicate the identified match to both the volunteer and client to in order to arrange a 3 way meeting. The volunteer and the client will have an informal introduction meeting to share information and see if the volunteer and client would like to work together. The Befriending Coordinator will speak to both the client and volunteer separately within 3 days and if both agree they will then arrange their meetings, once a week for 1-2 hours. Once a match has been made the Befriending Coordinator will arrange a visit bi-monthly to carry out a client review, on your own, to ensure that you

are happy. Any contact outside of these meetings will be via the Befriender Coordinator.

Ending befriending

Befriending relationships have a limited lifespan in order not allow the relationship to become dependent and to re-able the client. The volunteer will be with the client for up to 12 months, however, some relationships may end prematurely, if the client has moved away, feel they are ready to move on or because the relationship is not working. Although it may be necessary for the volunteer to reflect on the this last point, lessons will be learnt and combined with regular supervision and visits to the client, dysfunctional relationships may be avoided or at least identified at an early stage. The client will be aware of the timescale of the commitment. If you would wish to continue to volunteer after the 12 months your Befriender team member will make you aware of all volunteering (internal or external) opportunities within the voluntary sector.

There are various things that we do to ensure easy transition at the end of a match:

- Following the matching procedures ensuring a good match
- Ending is included in the training to ensure volunteers understand the principles and timescales
- The client and volunteer understand that the match period is only up to 12 months and therefore unreasonable expectations are eliminated
- Goals are agreed initially to enable the client to become more independent and to have direction and to become less socially isolated
- Project philosophy is to support the client to help themselves and not to replace care or practical help therefore not creating dependency
- Client reviews bi-monthly to identify issues
- Telephone contact between those reviews to ensure match is working
- Volunteer supervision every 6 weeks that will highlight any issues or concerns
- Annual satisfaction survey
- Final WEMWBS Wellbeing Evaluation demonstrates positivity for client and befriender and discussed at final meeting
- May be the end of the match but the beginning of a new phase of their lives
- If the friendship continues after the time allowed client and volunteer will be made aware this is outside the project and will not have the protection of the policies and procedures
- Bereavement counselling for volunteers if requested or where a client passes away.

Key personal safety guidelines see lone working policy

- Make sure the office knows your whereabouts
- PLAN for your own safety
- Familiarise yourself with the area you will be working in
- Present yourself appropriately in various contexts
- Communicate any concerns to your Befriender team member
- Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged and accessible
- Carry your ID badge with you at all times
- Follow the guidelines laid down by the programme
- Trust and listen to your instincts
- Record and report any incidents that cause you concern

DBS checks and risk assessment

Disclosure and Barring Service check

To ensure that our staff, volunteers and clients are kept safe we have to by law check all risks. All staff and volunteers have to undergo a DBS disclosure if they are working with vulnerable adults or children. If an adverse DBS disclosure is returned it will be reviewed by Ponthafren Association and a decision made as to whether you are suitable as a befriender volunteer. Paper work will be undertaken at the earliest opportunity by Ponthafren Association

Risk assessment

All clients referred to the project must undergo a Risk Assessment. This is completed by the Befriending Service team member staff with the client. A risk assessment will highlight any concerns and allow actions to prevent risks or lower any risks.

Lone working

This section is in accordance with the projects lone working policy which applies to all staff and volunteers engaged within the Ponthafren Association service across Powys. It acknowledges that staff and volunteers will spend a considerable time working alone without direct supervision. The health and safety policy states that all staff should receive adequate information and training to enable them to work safely and without risk to themselves or others. The following are general principles which can ensure staff and volunteers safety and should be followed at all times.

Each volunteer is responsible for:

- Adhering to the assessment of risk and other relevant policies.
- Take all reasonable steps not to place themselves, clients, fellow volunteers or staff at risk
- Take all reasonable steps to protect the organisation from harm.
In most cases it will be expected that there will be no identified or low risks in meeting a client as a result of a risk assessment that has been carried out at the initial referral/induction meeting
- Complete a lone Worker Details Form.
- Carry a mobile at all times. This equipment will be made available to the volunteer or member of staff when lone working.
- Be alert and trust your intuition; if you feel uncomfortable, or if you feel that the person you are visiting is uncomfortable, don't ignore the feeling and don't proceed with the visit. If the visit has started and you then feel uncomfortable, take the opportunity to leave as soon as possible.
- If find yourself in a potential dangerous situation the aim should be to remove yourself, and/or others form the situation as fast as possible.
- If any circumstances change or deteriorate you should always contact Befriending Coordinator.
- Be aware of environmental risks as well as potential risk form other members of the public e.g. schedule morning rather than late afternoon appointments if possible, park in an area as near as possible to street lighting, avoid parking in alley ways or shaded or covered areas.

Task Role

Once trained and in receipt of a DBS (which may take from 6wks to 3 months), our volunteers are matched and then introduced to a client, with the purpose of them spending a few hours together each week to have a chat, go for coffee or some other social activity. Volunteers aim to help people build up their confidence by providing a listening ear and encouraging the person to get out and about to rediscover old interests or find new ones. This project is about re-abling the clients not replacing something that has been lost. We want the client to regain their independence and re-engage with society and for it to be on their terms.

Responsibilities and Duties

- To establish and build a befriending relationship
- To establish and maintain appropriate boundaries within the befriending relationship
- To spend time/share activities with the client
- To be aware of, and work within, the policies and procedures of Ponthafren Association
- To respect confidentiality within the framework of Ponthafren 'In Safe Hands' Befriending Project
- To notify Ponthafren Association of any issues/difficulties relating to the client
- To undertake induction training and any other relevant training
- To attend Volunteer Support Groups and one-to-one support sessions with Ponthafren Association
- To complete the necessary administrative tasks (e.g. expenses claim forms, records of client contact)
- To work within a non-discriminatory framework
- To offer an accepting and understanding presence to the client
- To be consistent
- To be accountable
- To acknowledge positive qualities and praise

Skills and experience likely to be gained from the role

- An 'Introduction to Volunteering' Course with further course options
- An understanding of the specific needs of the 18-50 's who are isolated due to mental health issues
- Knowledge of the voluntary sector
- Learn new skills
- Experience of providing direct support people with mental health issues on a one to one basis
- Skills in developing personal boundaries and understanding the importance of maintaining these
- Meet new people

Person Specification

Whilst previous experience of the role is not essential, as full induction and training will be provided, we are looking for:

- Reliability
- Good communication skills with a range of people
- Ability to relate to individuals with personal/mental health issues
- Good listening skills
- Ability to share experiences
- Ability to enthuse and motivate people
- Positive outlook
- Flexibility
- Patience
- Non-judgmental
- Willing to learn
- Ability to share skills, interests or activities with people
- Volunteers are reminded to:
 - Adhere to the principles of confidentiality, for example do not discuss your client's details out in the public domain including your own home environment.
 - Adhere to the principles of equal opportunities, for example by providing appropriate, sensitive and impartial services and being accessible to all clients regardless of their personal circumstances
 - Adhere to clear boundaries, e.g. do not give out your telephone number; do not give any gifts however small or second hand they may be; and never lend, give or accept any money.

Commitment

The nature of befriending is to develop a relationship with a client. It is expected that the befrienders will give a commitment of at least 6 months to ensure consistency and to give the client a bit of security whilst they are re-engaging with the community.

13. Policies

Ponthafren 'In Safe Hands' Befriending Project has a set of policies and procedures which, in-conjunction with the organisational staff handbook and the volunteering handbook will support and guide you. Policies identify the key activities and provide a general strategy on how to handle issues as they arise. These documents inform staff, volunteers and clients of their rights and responsibilities under the law and give guidance of how we should react in various situations. Ponthafren Association have a range of volunteers undertaking various opportunities and therefore not all paperwork will be relevant, within your induction you will be made aware of all required paperwork. All policies will be made available to you during the application stage.

- Lone working
- Adult Protection Policy
- Confidentiality
- Complaints
- Ponthafren volunteer handbook
- Referral and waiting list procedure
- Supervision and support policy

Who will support me?

The Befriending Coordinator will support you throughout your time as a volunteer with the organisation. You will have regular supervision sessions every 6 weeks where you will be able to discuss any issues, training needs and concerns. You can ask for any additional support you may need. They will also ask you how you feel the client is responding to the befriending.

All volunteers should know who to go to if they have any problems. The level of support provided to volunteers will depend on what they are doing. For example, a volunteer who is supporting a client with specific needs may need more support than someone supporting a client who does not have any specific medical conditions, and a volunteer may need additional support because of an illness, a condition or lack of confidence. This should be identified at the early stage of a placement and reviewed regularly, as the need for support may decrease, as experience and skills are gained or increased at times of personal stress. Support can come in many different forms:

Supervision

Volunteers need regular supervision to provide them with the support they need to do the tasks they have been set. Regular supervision provides volunteers and the staff with an opportunity to:

- check whether they are enjoying their role
- ensure that they are working toward the aims of the project
- supporting the client to reach their goals
- Any issues with boundaries
- identify if extra support is required
- explore other avenues of volunteering
- assess if more training is required
- enquire how they are getting on with other staff, volunteers and clients

Offering volunteers regular 1:1 supervision sessions emphasises the importance of the work they are doing, this can also be done within a supervision group whereby the staff member and volunteer uses a separate room. In preparing for supervision, whether formal or informal you should ensure that the basic principles are followed. The time you give to an individual volunteer should be exclusively for him or her, be free from distractions and take place at regular intervals. It is also useful to keep personal supervision records, copies of which should be given to volunteers. It is suggested that supervision is every 6 weeks.

Satisfaction Survey

When involving volunteers you will need to know that the work they are doing is continuing to meet the organisation's and volunteer's needs. Annual satisfaction surveys can be one way of identifying how volunteers feel about their roles, their individual performance and career development within the organisation.

The results of the survey should be documented and remain confidential to the volunteer and staff member.

An appraisal should seek to address the following questions:

- Are you receiving enough support?
- What do you enjoy?
- What don't you enjoy?
- Is there anything we could be doing to make your role easier?
- Is there any training you feel you require?

Valuing volunteers and giving recognition

Volunteers value being thanked and appreciated for the time and commitment they give. National Volunteers Week is an ideal opportunity to congratulate volunteers for all their hard work. It is usually celebrated during the first week in June each year. Wales Council for Voluntary Action administers the Wales Volunteer of the Year Award scheme each year, which gives certificates of recognition for special volunteering achievements across the country.

Mental Health Awareness

Mental health problems are common, especially depression, anxiety and misuse of alcohol and other drugs. One person in four will experience some form of problem with their mental health in the course of a year. Bereavement, loss of a job and unemployment, debt, domestic abuse, rural isolation, exam pressure are a few issues that may affect your mental health.

There is a lot of stigma associated with mental health problems, particularly in rural areas. This may hinder people from seeking help. Many people are often ashamed to discuss their mental health problems with their friends and families or even work colleagues. They are often reluctant to seek help and support for such problems because they are worried what other people will think of them.

Sometimes someone suffering from mental illness will lack the insight to realise they need help, or that help is available. Some mental health problems cloud clear thinking and good decision making. A person experiencing such problems may not realise that they need help or that effective help is available for them - or they may be in such a state of distress they may not be able to think clearly about what they should do.

The most important thing you can offer that person is a chance for them to be able to talk to you and for you to be non-judgemental, encourage the person to get appropriate help and support. Visiting the GP is the most important first step. The GP will then make an assessment and either refer them to a counsellor (every GP practice in Powys has counsellor) or they might be referred to the community mental health team CMHT, or prescribed the appropriate medication. The GP/CMHT may also refer them to the nearest voluntary sector mental health service provider that offers services promoting 'recovery' for extra support and some meaningful day time activity.

If you feel concerned about the safety of the person then it is important that you contact your manager immediately to discuss your concerns.