

Introduction

GNS befriending volunteers are supported by a team of 3 coordinators. Requests for befriending are passed on to the Befriending Team coordinators. A coordinator will make a preliminary visit to the prospective client to assess whether the GNS can offer support. If we are able to offer support, the coordinator will do their best to match a volunteer with a client.

More often than not a befriending visit will be straightforward and both parties will have an enjoyable time together. However, in order to try and avoid any possible difficulties, the following guidance will give the volunteer confidence about what is expected and ensure that the client is kept safe and comfortable with the scheme.

What to do

For your own safety, please at all times follow the lone worker and personal safety guidance and use the buddy system (see **Section 5 Lone worker policy**).

- Please make sure you have all the details about the person you will be visiting before you set out. This should all be on the sheet provided by the Befriending Coordinator and should include name, address, phone number and essential details about the client. There should also be a contact number for emergencies if the client agrees.
- Take your identity card and, until the client knows you well, always show it - some clients may be unwilling to ask.
- Explain clearly who you are and why you have come - the Befriending Coordinator will have told them who to expect.
- Sometimes it is a good idea to phone ahead in the morning, just to make sure the client has not made alternative arrangements or forgotten. This might save you a wasted journey. You can withhold your number by entering 141 before the client's phone number.
- If you have a mobile phone then take it with you and make sure it has power and is switched on.
- If you have any concerns about the client's welfare, always report this to the Telephone Coordinator on the **GNS mobile 07561 890 100** who will contact the Safeguarding Officer.
- The Good Neighbour Scheme would always like to enable people to join activities in the community if possible. When chatting with a client you may discover an interest that they have or somewhere they would like to go. Please share this with the Befriending Coordinators in order that they could research possibilities. There may be some activity locally which would only require a lift or introduction. There may be a volunteer with a shared interest. The GNS could also provide a friend to accompany them if that was required.

- As a general rule, please keep discussions with a client confidential unless they give you permission to share. However, if you hear or see anything which may cause safeguarding concerns for the client, yourself or any other person, then contact the Telephone Coordinator immediately and say you have a safeguarding issue. The Telephone Coordinator will contact the Safeguarding Officer who will ring you back for more details.

What not to do

- We can only work with adults. The Disclosure and Barring Service checks that are carried out do not cover working with under 18s. At no time should you be left with an unattended child.
- Do not give your personal phone number, address or email unless you feel confident that it will not be abused.
- If you do not feel comfortable for any reason, then leave. Report your concerns to the Telephone Coordinator who will contact the Safeguarding Officer. Make a note of what has happened as soon as possible.
- If the client has a fall when you are there and they are unable to get up by themselves, **do not attempt to lift or move them**. Make sure the client is as warm and comfortable as possible and call 999. Paramedics are trained to check for injuries and to lift people correctly.
- You should **not**
 - deal with medications
 - help with personal care – dressing, washing, feeding or toilet needs – as there may be training required for a specific need
 - get involved with moving and handling a client who has physical difficulties
 - physically feed clients.

Becoming a befriender

If you are not currently on our list of befrienders but would like to become one, then please ring or text the **GNS mobile 07561 890 100** with your name and phone number and one of the Befriending Coordinators will call you back.