

Volunteer Befriender Role Description

Registered Charity No 515595

TITLE: Volunteer Befriender

FREQUENCY: Normally weekly, but this is to be agreed with the client

LOCATION: The community, normally the client's home

ACCOUNTABLE TO: Catherine Holligan Befriending Coordinator

THE ROLE

As a volunteer Befriender you will provide companionship and practical support to a person (client) with a palliative condition. Although our clients all have conditions that cannot be cured, many of them will live for several years, as we visit people with conditions such as Dementia, other people we visit may only have months left to live. The Befriending relationship helps to provide an additional social support by developing an affirming, emotion-focused relationship supporting the client, and if appropriate their family/carer too, to feel less isolated and more connected to the world around them. Befriending complements social, health and domestic support, it does not replace it. Befrienders do not provide personal or medical care, befrienders offer regular contact, helping with practical tasks where needed, this may include sharing a meal, walking the dog, light gardening. For some, often those close to the end of their life, Befriending may simply mean providing a comforting presence, lending emotional support by just sitting and being present with the client and/or their family/carer. The role of a Befriender is a very important and rewarding one for all involved; client, their family/carer and the Befriender.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Services and activities will vary as they are tailor-made for each individual befriending relationship, but may include:

- Visiting clients, usually at their home on an agreed date/time
- Offering support and companionship whilst respecting a person's independence and dignity
- Offering consistency, regular visits, giving the client something to plan for and look forward to
- Providing practical help, e.g. supporting them to get to an appointment
- Providing companionship, e.g. listening, talking, reading and sharing activities
- Providing opportunities outside of the home, e.g. visits to cafes, libraries, garden centre
- Supporting engagement in social activities within their community, e.g. church, knitting groups
- Signposting the client/carer to other agencies (with the support of the Coordinator)
- Providing a comforting presence, emotional support and human contact
- If appropriate working closely with and offering support to a client's family/carer
- Enabling family/carers to have some respite
- Offering support and companionship to a client and/or their family/ carer at end of life
- If appropriate supporting family members/carers after your client has died

- Maintaining documentation as required
- Communicating regularly with the Coordinator
- Informing the Coordinator if you have any concerns or worries
- Complete all mandatory training appropriate to your role, for example Information Governance
- Attending induction, training, team catch up sessions and 1:1 catch up's

WHAT YOU WILL NOT BE EXPECTED TO DO

- Personal Care
- Any manual handling including heavy household task or heavy shopping
- Administer medication or give any advice regarding medication
- Giving advice regarding legal or financial affairs
- Or any other task that you feel uncomfortable with

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

- Strong listening skills
- Strong communication skills
- Able to work independently
- Sensitivity and respect for others whose values and beliefs may differ from your own
- A high level of self-awareness
- A desire to improve the quality of life of others with life shortening illnesses
- Good literacy skills
- Patience, adaptability, flexibility and a willingness to help others
- Reliable, honest, and able to commit to regular, on-going visits
- A commitment to working in a manner that safeguards all
- Able and happy to work on your own while remaining part of a larger team
- A commitment and ability to work in a confidential manner
- A commitment and ability to work in a non- judgmental caring manner
- A commitment to undertake an induction and attend necessary training and support sessions
- An ability to work within the policies, procedures and guidelines of St Luke's Hospice, including Information Governance, Safeguarding, Lone Working and H&S

HOW WE SUPPORT YOU

- Relevant induction
- Ongoing, relevant training and other development opportunities
- 1:1 and group support
- Reimburse out of pocket travel expenses, in line with our policy

BENEFITS TO THE BEFRIENDER

- Experiencing the satisfaction and fulfilment that is derived from making a positive contribution to the well-being of an individual, their family and your local community
- Getting to know fellow Befrienders and clients and growing your personal network in your local community
- The opportunity to enhance your communication skills and gain a greater understanding of life-shortening illnesses
- Access to training and on-going support to ensure your experience is fulfilling and rewarding

Due to the nature of the role we require 2 satisfactory reference checks and an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, along with a trial period



StLukesHospice



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