

Good Practice in Befriending

A comprehensive guide to
befriending practice in the UK

August 2014



Befriending
Networks

Good Practice in Befriending has been compiled by Befriending Networks in consultation with representatives from a variety of befriending services. It is an updated version of the Befriending Code of Practice which was produced in 2009 by Befriending Network Scotland.

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Befriending Networks
63-65 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh
EH2 4SD
tel. 0131 261 8799
info@befriending.co.uk

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Introduction

Introduction

How to use this document

Terminology

The Good Practice Guide uses the following naming conventions:

- people who receive a befriending service=befriendees
- volunteers who are matched with befriendees=befrienders
- organisations which provide a befriending service=services
- supported relationships between individual befrienders and befriendees=matches
- staff who run a befriending service=coordinators

Some services may use different words, e.g. 'client' instead of 'befriender'. This may be particularly so in relation to staff job titles; e.g. in some services the 'service coordinator' is in fact a manager who does not work directly with befriendees. It should still be possible, however, to adapt the principles laid out in this Good Practice in Befriending guide appropriately for all befriending services.

Links within the electronic (PDF) version

In the electronic version of the Good Practice in Befriending Guide, all cross references to other sections of the document (i.e. the table of contents, the index, and all references within the text), are hyperlinked. References to external websites can also be clicked on to open the appropriate site.

Symbols

✓ = a checklist of policies, procedures or documentation relevant to that topic. This list is not exhaustive and it may not be appropriate for every service to have all of these, but it is important to consider each in the light of the relevant service (see 'Appendices: Checklists', p. 77).

^{vs} = this topic is covered under one of Befriending Networks' 'Vital Skills in Befriending' training courses (see <http://www.befriending.co.uk/vitalskillsinbefriending.php>).

g = indicates a part of the guidance that may be influenced by Scottish Government's GIRFEC policy for Scottish services working with children and young people or their families/carers (see 'Appendices: GIRFEC compliance...' p.84).

The purpose of this good practice guide

People who are supported by befriending services are often among the most vulnerable people in society. It is therefore essential that all befriending services:

- are very clear about what befriending involves
- are accountable
- know what constitutes good practice

The Good Practice in Befriending Guide therefore:

- describes the main issues which all befriending services, both new and well-established, should consider
- sets out minimum standards which ensure safe and competent practice
- makes suggestions to help services develop and maintain good or excellent practice
- gives some good practice examples
- refers services to other sources of support

Befriending Networks members are asked to use this document to inform their practice.

Suggestions:

- refer to the BNs resource 'Square One' for help setting up a new befriending service (www.befriending.co.uk)
- use this guide as a basis for an internal service evaluation, or use individual sections as a focus for management committee or staff meetings
- enhance staff skills by participating in the appropriate BNs Vital Skills course^{vs} (<http://www.befriending.co.uk/vitalskillsinbefriending.php>)

What is befriending?

Befriending is:

- a service offered to people who are identified as having particular needs, usually involving social isolation, often within a specific geographical location (see 'Eligibility criteria', p.53)
- a relationship between a volunteer befriender and a befriender (usually, but not always, 1:1) which is initiated, supported and monitored by a voluntary or statutory agency.

This is distinct from 'friendship' which refers to a private, mutual relationship which grows as a result of two people's paths happening to cross. It is also important to distinguish between the meaning of the word 'befriending' as it might occur in everyday usage ('making friends with') and its meaning in relation to the provision of a professional support service of 'friend-like' relationships.

Services may set up these befriending relationships on an open-ended basis or as fixed-term arrangements (e.g. one year) (see 'Length of relationships' p.70).

There is no requirement for statutory provision of befriending services for any particular groups, so available services vary widely between locations. It is notable, however, that the outcomes which befriending aims to achieve for befriendees (e.g. a reduction in isolation, increased resilience, improved wellbeing) contribute to the social policy goals set by local and national government.

Aims of befriending

The primary aim of befriending is to enhance the quality of a befriendees' life by offering them the opportunity to form a trusting relationship. More specifically, services often aim to enable their befriendees to:

- become less socially isolated
- develop their self confidence and emotional growth
- increase their capacity to use personal resources
- enhance their skills for forming and maintaining relationships with others
- develop greater resilience
- improve their wellbeing
- feel supported by someone who is consistent and reliable
- experience some purely social interaction on a regular basis (i.e. not simply as a by-product of receiving another service)

What is good practice in befriending?

Good practice in befriending includes:

- setting achievable outcomes in relation to its resources (see 'Running a befriending service', p.14) ^{VS}
- recruiting volunteers systematically and carefully, in accordance with the service's policies (see 'Recruiting befrienders' p.40) ^{VS}
- supporting befrienders by providing training, supervision and expenses (see 'Managing befrienders, p.39) ^{VS}
- providing a professional service to its befriendees, including referral, waiting list, assessment, matching, and ending procedures (see 'Befriendees', p.53 and 'Matches' p.62) ^{VS}
- protecting its befriendees (see 'Running a befriending service', p.14, and 'Befriendees', p.53) ^{VS}
- being governed effectively (see 'Governance', p.14)
- supporting the work and development of its service coordinator and other staff (see 'Running a befriending Service', p.14) ^{VS}

- monitoring all aspects of its practice (see 'Running A befriending service', p.14)^{vs}
- continuing to review its policies and procedures in response to internal and external evaluation of its service, and to reflect changes in legislation and public policy (see 'Running a befriending service', p.14)

Voluntary or paid befriending

The majority of befriending services recruit volunteers for this role, but a small number employ staff who take on the role of befriender. Evaluations show that the voluntary nature of befriending is of significant value to befriendees: however, in some cases, e.g. where the befriender has higher support needs, or there are significant geographical problems recruiting volunteers, services may make the decision to recruit paid benders. Paid or unpaid, however, the same underlying principles of good practice should apply.

Models of befriending delivery

This guide explores all aspects of good practice in relation to the following three models of befriending delivery:

Face-to-face befriending

This is the most common kind of befriending and involves a carefully matched befriender and befriender meeting for a couple of hours on a regular basis (usually weekly) either at the befriender's home or out in the community. A few services arrange for benders to visit their benders' homes, although it should be noted that there may be additional safety considerations inherent in this type of service (see Safety: Other people' p.28).

Distance befriending

This usually involves a befriender phoning the befriender they are matched with for a chat at a prearranged time on a regular basis, but can involve email, instant messaging or letters. There is an increasing number of distance befriending services, and while their outcomes may be the same as face-to-face befriending, some differences in practice might include:

- the befriender and befriender may never actually meet
- they do not need to live near each other
- as there is no travel, the weekly time commitment can be far less and benders can be easier to recruit
- it may be easier for people who are housebound to become benders
- it may be more likely that benders will have more than one befriender

The decision to provide distance befriending is usually taken because of the needs of benders: however it is increasingly recognised that with similar levels of resources, distance befriending allows more benders to be included in the service. Benders and

befrienders are still carefully matched, and such services are clearly distinct from crisis support or information-giving helplines.

(See BNs document 'A Summary of Recent Research Evidence' in the Befriending Resource Pack, downloadable from www.befriending.co.uk, for data about distance befriending).

Group befriending

Group befriending is where a number of befriendees and befrienders are brought together as an alternative to 1:1 befriending. A group may be set up to address the particular needs of a specific group of befriendees, areas of common interest or activity, or simply because of resource issues, as it may be less costly to run such services. Some find that this is a way of working with volunteers who are not immediately suitable for 1:1 befriending, or who have special or extra support needs. It can also be an easier way to start for someone reluctant or uncomfortable to participate in the more intense relationship involved in a 1:1 service. Other services may match two or more volunteers with two or more befriendees. Sometimes the ratio of befrienders to befriendees is 1:1 even within groups.

Some befriending services run preparation groups before 1:1 befriending starts, e.g. to build confidence, and some run 'moving on' groups to give service users the opportunity to test out social skills they have developed in their 1:1 befriending.

Some befriending groups are built around activities, but the purpose is still essentially about forming relationships (e.g. the Men's Sheds initiative)

Many befriending services, in addition, set up groups in order to be able to offer a service to people who are on their waiting list, in order that some social support may be offered in the meantime.

Peer befriending

In general, the definition of who counts as a 'peer' is set by the aims of the relationship. If, for example, a young person with a learning disability wants to meet other young people for social activities, the appropriate peer would be someone of a similar age, rather than, necessarily, someone with a learning disability. However, if a young person recently diagnosed with epilepsy is trying to rebuild their confidence to go out and socialise, an appropriate peer might be someone who had been through the same experience, not necessarily someone of a similar age.

The benefits of peer befriending can be:

- empathy and understanding founded on personal experience
- inspiration, hope, practical tips
- reciprocal support

- a focus on ‘enabling’ rather than ‘looking after’

The potential pitfalls of peer befriending include:

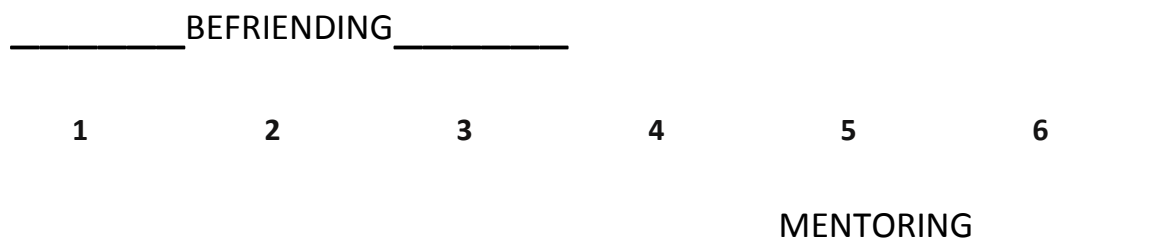
- the focus being on the problem rather than the individual
- possible damage to individuals’ self-esteem/recovery if they are not selected to become befrienders
- the peer being too involved with the issue and only seeing one way (their way) of dealing with it
- the befriender taking too much responsibility for the befriender’s problems
- befriendeds being pigeonholed rather than integrated into the wider community

Befriending or mentoring

There can be a broad overlap between what is called ‘befriending’ and what is called ‘mentoring’ and most services fall somewhere along this continuum. However, befriending services recognise the intrinsic value of the relationship between the parties and use it to address social isolation resulting from vulnerability on the part of the befriended. For mentoring, the relationship has instrumental value in supporting the achievement of goals and the mentee does not necessarily need to be living with factors making them vulnerable. The overlap between befriending and mentoring occurs when befriending services have goals beyond the relationship: e.g. reintegration into the community, or where mentoring services ask the matched pairs to build up their relationship first before moving on to work on their targets.

The befriending/mentoring spectrum

The befriending / mentoring spectrum is based on the nature of the objectives of a supportive relationship and on the importance given to achieving those objectives through the relationship. There are six broad types on this spectrum illustrated and described below:



- 1. Befriending** – the role of the volunteer is to provide informal, social support. The primary objective of the relationship is to form a trusting relationship over time usually in order to reduce isolation and to provide a relationship where none currently exists.

Other outcomes may occur, e.g. a growth in confidence, but these are never set as objectives for the relationship.

2. **Befriending** – the role of the volunteer is to provide informal, social support. There may be additional stated objectives at the start of the relationship, e.g. increasing involvement in community activities. The success of the relationship is not dependent on these objectives being achieved, but they are seen as a potential benefit of befriending over time.
3. **Befriending/mentoring** – the role of the volunteer is to provide informal, social support and through this supportive relationship to go on to achieve stated objectives, e.g. increasing clients' confidence to enable them to do activities independently in the future. The objectives form a basis of discussion between project, volunteer and client at an early stage and are reviewed over time.
4. **Mentoring/Befriending** – the role of the volunteer is to develop objectives with the client over time. Initially the role is to develop a relationship through social activities in order to establish a level of trust on which objective-setting can be based. Due to the client's changing circumstances, objectives may take time to set and may be low key.
5. **Mentoring** – the role of the volunteer is to work with the client to meet objectives which are agreed at the start of the relationship. These are achieved through the development of a trusting relationship which involves social elements but which retains a focus on the objectives agreed at the start.
6. **Mentoring** – the role of the volunteer is to work with a client solely on agreed objectives which are clearly stated at the start. Each meeting focuses primarily on the achieving the objectives and the social relationship, if achieved, is incidental.

Running a befriending service

Running a befriending service

Governance

Governing Body's responsibilities

The Management Committee/Board of Directors/Board of Trustees of a charity leads the strategic development of the organisation and is legally responsible for its activities. The day-to-day management of the service should be delegated to staff as far as possible.

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) lists a governing body's responsibilities thus:

- the organisation is clear in its purpose and direction (strategic planning is recommended)
- all decisions are taken in line with the purpose and ideals of the organisation as laid out in its governing document
- assets are safeguarded and used efficiently for those for whom the organisation exists
- the organisation fulfils all its legal and regulatory requirements
- the organisation is effectively managed, operates efficiently and works within its policies and budgets, any relevant good practice guidance and the law
- the organisation is accountable financially and in other ways
- there is a proper procedure for the recruitment and supervision of staff
- the Committee itself is representative and functions effectively

Suggestions:

The Office of the Scottish Charitable Regulator (OSCR) has useful publications on its website, including:

<http://www.oscr.org.uk/media/1571/Guidance%20for%20Charity%20Trustees%20updated%20Sept%202010.pdf>

The Charity Commission in England and Wales has similar guidance:

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/>

And in Northern Ireland: <https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/>

Ask BNs about training to help the service's governing body prepare for the future of the organisation.

Prepare an Induction Pack for new Board members (see

http://www.befriending.co.uk/befriendinglibrary_more.php?id=116 for example)

Support for Staff

It is particularly important that service staff (most of whom are expected to nurture relationships between potentially vulnerable befriendees and their befrienders) receive appropriate training as well as regular support and supervision-typically from a senior member of staff or a member of the management committee, or externally. BNs recommend that:

- befriending coordinators have a minimum of one face-to-face support and supervision session every three months
- coordinators have a designated person who will conduct these sessions, and that, as far as possible, this remains consistent
- coordinators and their supervisors have an agreed agenda to allow both people to prepare for the sessions
- where there is no-one in the organisation able to provide support and supervision, training is provided or external specialist support and supervision is sought and budgeted for.

For an example of a supervision policy, see BNs website:

http://www.befriending.co.uk/befriendinglibrary_more.php?id=167).

Organisational responsibilities

Befriending services need to take responsibility and be accountable for the service they are offering. Services have responsibilities towards: befriendees; befrienders; employees; referring agencies; funders; regulatory bodies (e.g. OSCR); and the wider community. Many befriending services are stand-alone, but many are also part of a wider organisation. In this instance it is important that service standards and policies are not inconsistent between departments.

Each service has a responsibility to:

- be clear and explicit about what they offer
- the desired outcomes
- recruit and manage staff and volunteers appropriately-providing adequate training, support and supervision
- protect confidentiality
- treat all stakeholders with respect
- protect all parties involved with the service from abuse, exploitation and undue risk
- have transparent and accountable working methods
- foster a culture of equality and diversity

Staff

Befriending is a cost-effective service due to the involvement of volunteers. However, volunteering must be supported if it is to be effective. It is strongly recommended that services employ a sufficient ratio of paid staff to befrienders and befriended in order to provide a safe, consistent and reliable service^{VS} (see 'Staff/befriender ratios', p.17). Key responsibilities for staff include:

- developing service policies and procedures^{g1}
- keeping up to date with relevant legislation
- managing and forecasting the service budget
- promoting the service to potential befriended, volunteers, referrers^{g2} and funders
- recruiting and selecting volunteer befrienders^{VS}
- training befrienders^{VS}
- building relationships with referral agencies^{g3}
- processing befriended referrals
- generating funding
- assessing befriended^{g4} (often in their own homes)^{VS}
- matching befriended with befrienders^{VS}
- providing regular support and supervision to befrienders^{VS}
- providing ongoing support to befriended^{VS}
- reviewing the progress of matches^{VS V}
- supporting befrienders and befriended at the end of a relationship^{VS}
- keeping appropriate records^{g5 VS}
- evaluating the service provided^{VS}
- reporting to the management committee, funders, referrers and regulatory bodies (e.g. OSCR in Scotland, or the Charity commission for England and Wales)

Most of the above can be carried out by the service coordinator, but in larger organisations coordinators may have the support of other paid staff in the tasks of administration and fundraising, as these can become significant areas of work that detract from caseload management. The befriended caseload should be adjusted according to the other tasks which are central to the coordinator's job description.

Suggestion:

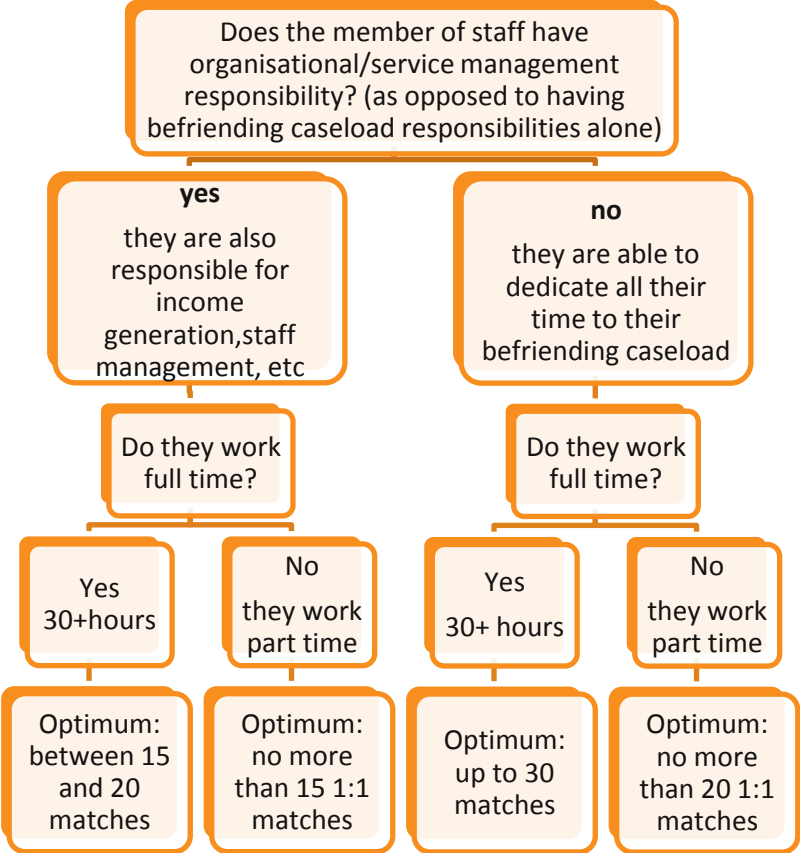
Visit the resources section at www.befriending.co.uk for sample job descriptions and person specifications for staff

Staff/befriender ratios

The number of befriending matches that can be adequately supported by a service depends on the level of available resources. There are a huge number of variables, including:

- the type of befriending support offered (e.g. 1:1 or group, face-to-face or distance)
- the number of dedicated staff hours for the service
- whether or not home visits are carried out for all befriendees
- additional needs of befriendees (e.g. if they are deaf, or have dementia, they may need significantly longer periods of time or more frequent periods of time spent with them in initial assessment or ongoing support)
- the level of support required by befrienders
- the location of the service, e.g. urban/rural
- levels of administrative support for staff
- whether or not befriending staff have responsibility for income generation and reporting to funders
- the level of support from the board/management committee
- how well established the service is
- whether the service is part of a larger organisation or stand alone

It is therefore impossible to provide definitive recommendations of how many matches the average service can sustain. However, the following flowchart provides a very approximate guide:



It should be noted that calculating the ideal ratio is not simply a matter of working out the number of staff hours based on the number of befriending matches-the coordinator will need to undertake certain tasks (e.g. designing promotional materials, reporting to funders, etc.) whether they are supporting ten matches or thirty.

Suggestion:

If the ratios of the service are significantly different from these, particularly if the service is operating in a traditional 1:1 model, consider which areas of practice you have less time for as a result (e.g. the amount of direct support and supervision given to befrienders) and whether it is still possible to deliver good practice within these parameters.

Policies and procedures

Each service will have its own policies and procedures depending on the nature of the service and the structure of its organisation. There are, however, several fundamental issues which should be addressed at a policy level by all befriending services. Also outlined below are some additional policies which are indicators of excellent practice.

Suggestions:

Compare the organisation's policies against the Policy Checklist' (appendix 1 p.?)

Review key policies and procedures on an annual basis and record on the document both the review date and when the next review is due

Look at the sample policies and procedures and an example of a policy and procedure review timetable, available free to BNs members on the website:

<http://www.befriending.co.uk/befriendingresources.php>

The following list is not exhaustive as individual services may have other policies and procedures which are essential in relation to the specific service they provide and/or the befriender group they work with (e.g. a medication policy, personal care policy, etc.) Further, services may use different terminology or have combined two or more of these policies:

Anti-Bullying or Dignity at Work Policy

A Dignity at Work policy should apply to everyone involved in the organisation (including members of the governing body, staff, befrienderes and befrienders) and it should define bullying as a disciplinary offence. There must be a confidential route the bullied person can

use to access help. Anti-bullying policies usually involve a two-stage process: informal, and then (if there is no resolution or the allegation is particularly serious) formal. Policies that address volunteers and service users as well as staff and Board members will need to differentiate between the processes adopted, as the legislation will differ depending on the legal status of the individual's relationship to the organisation (e.g. befriendeds and befrienders are not covered by employment legislation).

Suggestion:

Visit www.gov.uk/acas for more information.

Grievance and Disciplinary Policy

This HR policy is a legal requirement. The legislation and appropriate procedures are different for paid staff and volunteers, and it is crucial to obtain professional advice if you do not have an HR department. General information can be obtained from www.gov.uk/acas.

Complaints Policy

This policy should include information about how befriendeds, befrienders, families, carers and referral agencies can make a complaint, and specify how this would be dealt with (including timescales). Information about the policy can be made available via a 'complaints and compliments' leaflet, which also gives stakeholders the opportunity for positive feedback. It is good practice to ensure that there is a clear route for making a complaint about the coordinator should this ever be necessary, as this demonstrates transparent accountability on the part of the service.

Confidentiality Policy

Befriending staff and volunteers will inevitably learn confidential information about their befriendeds. A confidentiality policy should consist of guidelines on the sensitive handling of personal information within the service, and between organisations, e.g. referral agencies⁸⁶. This policy should be made available to staff, befrienders and befriendeds (and their carers or guardians where appropriate). Other agencies should be made aware of the service's policy.

Personal information about staff and volunteers should be covered by HR and data protection policies.

Confidential information which relates to befriendeds is covered by data protection legislation. Training for befrienders^{vs} on the issue of confidentiality should crucially include:

- situations when information must be shared (e.g. child or adult protection issues), and the processes involved in this, including possible referral or reporting to external agencies by the coordinator
- an emphasis on the role of the coordinator in holding confidential information, and the responsibility of the befriender to disclose information about the match to the coordinator.

The Confidentiality Policy should be consistent with the Data Protection Policy, which relates to the storage of electronic and hard copy information, and should cover all personal information held. Further information can be obtained from the Information Commissioner: www.ico.gov.uk.

Data Protection Policy

Information about individuals, whether stored on computer or paper, and whether consisting of words or images, falls within the scope of the Data Protection Act (1998), under which personal information must be:

- obtained and processed fairly and lawfully
- held only for specified purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate and up to date
- not kept longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the Act
- kept secure (including during disposal)
- not transferred out of Europe

Any organisation which holds personal data (i.e. which relates to an identifiable living individual) may have to register as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). See www.ico.gov.uk for more information.

It should be noted that, in most cases, people have a right to see a copy of anything that is written about them.

Handling Vetting Information or Disclosures Policy

In Scotland:

Disclosure Scotland requires that all registered organisations have a written policy on the handling, holding and destroying of PVG Scheme membership information. A sample policy can be found here:

<http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/publications/documents/MODELHANDLINGPOLICYNew2011Codever3ed2.pdf>

It is important to familiarise yourself with the handling, access, storage, retention and disposal requirements. All PVG Scheme membership records should be appropriately destroyed after the person they relate to ceases their involvement with the service. For befriending services, befrienders will be almost invariably carrying out regulated work, either with children or protected adults. Almost without exception, any adult signing up to become a befriender can be viewed as receiving a welfare service that makes them 'protected' for the duration of their involvement, so all befriending services working with adults would be advised to carry out this check on potential befrienders. The definition of 'protected adult' can be seen here: <http://disclosurescotland.co.uk/faq>.

In England and Wales:

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) also requires registered organisations to have a policy on handling, holding and destruction of DBS certificates. A sample policy can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/143669/handling-dbs-cert.pdf

Crucially, certificates should not normally be retained for longer than 6 months after the recruitment decision is made.

DBS checks should be requested for all befrienders working with children, while for those working with adults, a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) enhanced disclosure should be requested. It is worth noting that one of the distinctions between the two systems is that unless befriending for adults routinely involves any element of personal care or conveying (e.g. regular car use to assist mobility), then spending time socialising is not listed as a regulated activity. This means that services cannot request a barring list check for potential befrienders (i.e. access to any non-criminal record check from previous employers, etc., which may relate to their unsuitability to work with the befriender). This may make services wish to be more rigorous over the references they take up.

In Northern Ireland:

Conditions are similar to England and Wales in terms of the rules around what type of checks should be carried out and the handling and retention elements of disclosures. Services in NI can access the DBS for checks, or apply through Access NI for a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check only (<http://dojni.gov.uk/accessni>).

Driving Policy

If befrienders are allowed to carry befrienders in their cars, services should have a specific policy which covers:

- the befriender's responsibility for ensuring appropriate insurance (see 'Insurance', p.30)

- what documentation should be shown to the service (e.g. insurance certificate, MOT certificate, driving licence) and how regularly
- what expenses can be claimed
- who is responsible for providing suitable child seats, where required
- any permission required from a parent/guardian/carer
- the procedure for notifying the service in the event that the befriender loses their licence or has an endorsement

The policy should also cover staff who use their cars in the course of their work.

Equality and Diversity Policy

There is a legal right to comply with the Equality Act (2010).

Having a commitment to equality and diversity means actively combating both institutional and individual discrimination against groups of people (e.g. on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, pregnancy, gender reassignment, faith, age or socioeconomic status). This is an extremely important issue for befriending organisations, and their policy should address all areas of their work, including:

- staff recruitment
- befriender recruitment and selection (see 'Recruiting befrienders', p.40 and 'Selection of befrienders' p.42) ^{vs}
- befriender referrals (see 'Referrals', p.53)
- matching (see 'Issues to consider in matching', p.62) ^{vs}

Organisations are expected to make reasonable adjustments to the provision of information and opportunities to ensure maximum accessibility to different groups (e.g. providing large print leaflets).

Financial Management Policy

The need for this policy will depend on whether the befriending service constitutes part of a wider organisation, in which case the financial systems and policies will probably be the responsibility of another department. However, good financial management policies should include:

- how the organisation's financial viability is monitored and reviewed, and by whom
- how budgets are set, when and by whom
- how reserves are built and what levels should be maintained
- how salary levels are set and reviewed
- staff pension provision
- authorised staff spending limits
- the use of bank accounts, cheques, debit cards, online banking etc

- who within the organisation can incur expenses and to what level
- petty cash procedures and limits
- staff and volunteer expenses (this may be a separate policy in its own right)
- the procedure for drawing up and auditing/inspecting annual accounts

Health and Safety Policy

If a service has more than five employees, a written Health and Safety Policy is mandatory. Whatever the size of the organisation, it is good practice to have a policy and to identify who has responsibility for health and safety. In addition:

- if resources allow, at least one staff member should attend a health and safety course.
- records should be maintained for emergency evacuations
- accidents must be recorded in an Accident Book (which must meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act) (see 'Data Protection Policy', p.20)
- equipment and machinery must be checked and maintained regularly, and electrical equipment should be PAT tested regularly
- fire procedures must be explained to everyone, displayed clearly and practised
- there should be a nominated person responsible for e.g. maintaining the first aid box. In larger organisations, there must be a trained first aider
- procedures for risk assessment, both on and off the premises, must be detailed (see 'Risk assessments', p.27)
- detailed procedures should be written describing how to report incidents (including any differences in the procedures for staff and volunteers)
- environmental health issues (such as display screen working, room temperature and lighting) should be included

Health and Safety requirements (e.g. in relation to the requirement for fire alarms; the number of first aiders needed and the degree to which they should be trained; and whether a Health and Safety at Work poster must be displayed etc) may vary according to the size of the organisation. All staff and volunteers should be made aware of their responsibilities according to the legislation.

Suggestion:

For further information on these topics, visit the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk and the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives website: www.healthyworkinglives.com.

Consider developing a recording system for 'near miss' incidents and using these records to help when reviewing risk assessments.

Lone Working Policy

(see 'Safety', p.26)

Both staff and befrienders may be required to work alone (possibly outside normal working hours): in the office, visiting a befriender's house, and/or out in the community. It is important to think about how the inherent risks can be minimised^{vs}, for example by:

- gathering as much information as possible from referrers^{g4} before visiting befriendeds for the first time (see 'Referrals', p.53 and 'Information from referrers', p.54)
- scheduling initial visits to new befriendeds for daylight hours
- ensuring the workplace exterior is well-lit, if possible
- considering any potential risks involved in first meetings between potential volunteers and staff
- asking staff and volunteers to let someone know where they are going to be, how long they expect to be there and when they return (e.g. by text)
- giving staff and befrienders personal attack alarms/work mobile phones
- ensuring that befrienders are aware of on-call and out-of-hours arrangements (see 'Out-of-hours procedures', p.30)
- ensuring that befrienders' next of kin have a telephone number for the service

Different people feel unsafe in different situations, and lone working procedures should be flexible enough to respond sensitively to these variations.

The policy should be read in conjunction with each individual risk assessment^{vs}.

Suggestion:

See www.befriending.co.uk for personal safety information.

Photography Policy

It is important to ensure that befrienders and service staff have the befriender's permission (as well as that of parent or guardian, if appropriate) in writing before taking photographs. A model release form should be required documentation in these circumstances. Specific permission should be sought from everyone featured in publicity materials, on websites, or any material which is shared with any other organisation. This policy should be consistent with the Data Protection Policy.

Protection of Children/Vulnerable Adults/Vulnerable Groups Policy

This policy should:

- state who is being protected

- define what is meant by 'harm' and 'abuse'
- refer to any relevant legislation (e.g. the Protection of Children(Scotland) Act 2003; the Children Act 2004;the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007; Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- list the responsibilities of the organisation, staff, befrienders and referrers in relation to the protection of children/vulnerable adults.
- lay out the procedures to be followed if it is suspected that someone is being harmed
- refer to the organisation's confidentiality policy and describe under what circumstances individuals must breach confidentiality^{g6}, to whom, and how

Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy

This should lay out the organisation's commitment to follow the legal requirements of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as a minimum). Reference should be made to the organisation's 'Handling Vetting Information or Disclosures Policy' (see p.20) and how any information will be used in line with the Act. This policy should also be written with reference to the organisation's 'Equality and Diversity Policy' (see p.22) and 'Protection of Children/Vulnerable Adults/Vulnerable Groups Policy' (see p.24).

Support and Supervision Policy

Regular and frequent 1:1 support and supervision should be provided as a matter of course for both staff and befrienders^{vs} (see 'Support for staff', p.15 and 'Supporting and supervising befrienders' p.47). These sessions should be minuted, with both action and development plans drawn up, and signed by both parties. This policy should describe who will provide the support (e.g. the coordinator will manage befrienders, the Chair of the Management Committee will manage the service coordinator, etc.), and how frequently. A system of annual appraisals should also be included. External support should be sought if expertise is not available internally.

Training and Development Policy

This should refer to induction and ongoing training and development for volunteers^{vs} in all roles as well as for paid staff. The policy should be clear about which training (if any) is compulsory (or refer to individual role descriptions which specify this). Procedures for reviewing individuals' training needs on a regular (usually annual) basis should also be included, and a training record kept.

Suggestion:

For BNs training designed for befriending staff, see <http://www.befriending.co.uk/trainingandevents.php>.

Volunteer Policy

This policy should include commitments to:

- value volunteers
- treat them with respect and dignity
- avoid asking them to do work which should be undertaken by paid staff

It should also outline:

- what roles they may take up within the organisation and why
- the induction, training and ongoing support that volunteers will receive (see 'Training and Development Policy', p.25)
- volunteer expenses procedure and entitlements
- insurance cover for volunteers (see 'Insurance' p.30)
- opportunities for personal and/or professional development (see 'Managing befrienders', p.39)
- any other policies which are relevant to volunteers (e.g. 'Lone Working Policy', see p.24 and 'Health and Safety Policy', see p.23)

Safety

Risks in befriending^{VS}

Risk must be a careful consideration for both befriendees and befrienders, because:

- befrienders often work 1:1 with potentially vulnerable people
- there is no direct supervision
- befriendees may meet their befriender in a variety of different locations-possibly including the befriender's home
- meetings often take place outside normal working hours (see 'Lone Working', p.24)

Services cannot eliminate risk altogether, but they are required by law (Health and Safety at Work Act 1974) to manage it as far as is reasonably practicable. They can manage it effectively by ensuring good practice, especially in the following areas:

- assessing and selecting befrienders^{VS}
- training befrienders^{VS}
- supporting and supervising befrienders^{VS}
- referrals^{VS}
- matching^{VS}
- boundaries^{VS}
- confidentiality^{VS}
- beginnings and endings^{VS}

Suggestion:

Services should pay particular attention to their Health and Safety Policy and procedures (see p.23), reviewing them annually and striving to achieve a balance between optimum safety and reasonable freedom. Rather than restricting activities, good risk management should give services the confidence to be adventurous. More information can be found on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

Befriender referrals

Services should ask referrers^{g2} to disclose in writing any information they have about the befriender's circumstances^{g4} or any change therein which may affect the safety of either the befriender or the befriender. Referrers, therefore, need to be fully aware of the nature of befriending, particularly where it takes place on a 1:1 basis, is not directly supervised and may involve home visits. Referrals may not be accepted if safety is compromised. If befrienders self-refer (or are referred by family or friends)^{g7}, this source of information is not available and services are advised to consider seeking additional information from other professional sources.

Risk assessments^{vs}

Services should:

- assess the potential risks which befrienders will encounter and consider the safety implications
- seek to minimise these risks
- prepare befrienders to work with vulnerable people by raising their awareness of situations which could potentially be misinterpreted and lead to allegations (see 'Boundaries', p.65)
- consider any potential risk alongside potential gains

Suggestion:

Services should consider basing their risk assessment procedures on the HSE's straightforward 'Five Steps to Risk Assessment' guide:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm>

Locations and activities

As well as general service parameters, types of proposed locations and activities should be subject to individual risk assessments^{vs}. The location of the befriending meetings should be considered carefully and both the befriender and befriender should be encouraged to tell

the service worker if they do not feel comfortable with a setting. Services should be explicit about whether befrienders can visit befriendees' homes, and this should be in writing and in material routinely given to befrienders and befriendees.

Each service should think about which activities are safe and appropriate for befrienders and befriendees to do together and consider whether any of them require specific written consent from parents/guardians. Services may want to draw up list of 'approved' activities and venues, and ask befrienders to discuss any other possibilities in advance. It is up to individual venues (e.g. cinemas) to ensure they are safe for the public: however, services may need to consider how safe a type of venue or activity is for each individual befriender.

Other people

It is important to remember that not only the people directly involved in the befriending relationship should be risk assessed. For example, do other people who live in the befriender's house pose a risk to the befriender? Equally, the befriender may have had a Disclosure carried out and have given references, but their friends and family have not. A 1:1 befriending relationship should normally involve only the befriender and befriender and not include friends or family of either party, unless the communication or care needs of the befriender determine the requirement for a carer to be present. Also, befrienders who visit the befriender's home may come into occasional contact with carers and other family members. All third parties with whom the befriender or befriender is likely to have regular contact should form part of the organisational risk assessment (see examples below). Finally, it should be remembered that, despite their best efforts, the service may not be aware of every pertinent aspect of someone's background.

Examples of third parties in befriending visits:

- the wife of a befriender who has speech difficulties after having a stroke sat in on the first four visits with the befriender in order to help the befriender to become familiar with her husband's speech. This happened at the request of the befriender and with the agreement of the coordinator and befriender.
- a disabled client requires assistance with feeding and toileting. This is not part of the remit of a befriender so there was always a professional carer present during outings.
- a housebound befriender lives with her adult disabled son. During befriending visits, he stayed in his own room but was still in the house while the befriender is there.

Personal details

Services should think about which personal details befriendees and befrienders can share with each other, and be clear about their reasons for these decisions^{vs}. Do both parties have access to the same type of information about each other, e.g. family circumstances, address, phone number? (see 'Boundaries', p.65).

Befriender's responsibility

If a befriender is very clear about their role, it is easier for them to respond appropriately if a problem arises. If training in 'boundaries' is delivered at an appropriate level to all befrienders ^{vs}, unnecessary difficulties will be avoided. Befrienders may not otherwise understand the possible implications of actions which they may see as simply being helpful and polite (e.g. going to the cash machine for the befriended, or helping them with their medication) (see 'Boundary guidelines', p.66) Services should therefore:

- use befriender training to explain why each safety procedure is in place
- use support and supervision sessions to reinforce the importance of boundaries and safety procedures
- explore emergency scenarios during training
- explain to befrienders what activities and actions they are insured for (see 'Insurance', p.30)
- decide what action to take if a befriender consistently ignores boundaries or health and safety guidelines (see 'Boundaries', p.65 and 'Health and Safety Policy', p.23)

Suggestion:

Consider providing befrienders with emergency contact numbers or the befriended's next of kin details (with their written permission)

Befrienders' own safety

Befrienders have to take some responsibility for their own personal safety, for example:

- removing themselves from/avoiding unsafe situations (e.g. poorly lit areas)
- ensuring they have adequate transport (e.g. by being aware of bus times)
- letting someone know where they are going and what time they expect to return, while respecting befriended confidentiality (see 'Confidentiality', p.70)
- providing a nominated contact, whose details should be shared with the service, with a sealed envelope containing full contact details for the befriended and requesting it only be opened if there are concerns about their safety, which would comply with confidentiality and data protection concerns
- informing the service if they are concerned for their safety

Services should be careful to respect each befriender's personal sense of what is and isn't safe for them.

Befriendeds' safety

Services should be clear with their befrienders about the level of responsibility they have for the befriended's safety (e.g. regarding the avoidance of unsafe activities or compliance with

the law about the use of seat belts and car seats). Befrienders should be given guidelines about what to do if the befriender does not agree with their assessment of unacceptable risk.

Suggestion:

- verify the safety of befrienders' cars by checking documentation regularly
- consider offering first aid training to befrienders

Example:

A service which works with elderly befriendeds makes a full assessment of each befriended's vulnerability based on information gathered: during assessment, from the referrer, on an ongoing basis from their befriender, and through befriended reviews. Clearly defined procedures are then written for each person's befriender. For example, if a befriended who has been assessed as extremely vulnerable doesn't answer the door, the befriender is expected to ring a named contact. If the same happens with a befriended who has been assessed as being more resilient, the befriender should try to ring them later the same day and notify the coordinator if there is still no response. Phone numbers for appropriate contacts and agencies are provided to each befriender.

Insurance

Organisational

Services must ensure that they have public liability and personal accident insurance for befrienders.

Car Use (see 'Driving Policy' p.21)

Befrienders should inform their insurance company if they are using their own car in the course of their volunteering (rather than simply travelling to and from meetings with their befriended), as some insurers count this as 'business use'. If the insurer has not been informed they could refuse to pay in the event of a claim. There may be a small additional charge for this extra cover, and services should consider whether they allocate a budget for reimbursing their befrienders.

Out of hours procedures

Services should consider the out-of-hours support they can realistically provide for befrienders. It is not acceptable for coordinators to be on call during the evenings and weekends if this is not part of their contract of employment, and coordinators who do so are unlikely to be covered by their employers' insurance.

All befrienders should be given emergency contact numbers, e.g. out of hours Social Work Department, taxi service, the befriender's next of kin, if appropriate, but it is particularly important for befrienders who work out of office hours to be completely confident of steps to take in the event of an emergency.

Suggestion:

Consider providing emergency procedures and contact details on a laminated credit-sized card which befrienders can carry with them at all times.

Other safety issues to consider

Safety may be compromised by certain activities, e.g. alcohol and/or drugs may change the dynamics of a situation. Equally, a befriender or a befriender's medical condition^{g8} may have an impact on safety, and services may want to ask both parties to disclose any such conditions; however, such information must never be shared without the individual's permission. (see 'Boundaries', p.65) It should also be made clear to everyone involved that if either the befriender or befriender ever has an acute infectious illness then the befriending service will be temporarily suspended in order to protect the other person.

Staff safety

Many of the issues described above are also relevant to the service staff. Staff members should not take on tasks which are beyond their remit and should avoid, in particular, placing themselves at risk in order to assess situations for their befrienders.

Suggestions:

- assess the safety issues for befrienders and consider the links between safety and the service's recruitment, training, supervision, support, referral and matching procedures^{vs}.
- provide guidance on safety issues to befrienders and ensure they understand their own responsibilities
- provide ID cards for staff and befrienders
- maintain a sense of proportion and recognise where the limits of the service's responsibilities lie
- offer befrienders a personal alarm or use of an emergency mobile phone if they don't have their own
- ensure the service gathers enough information to make an adequate assessment of the potential safety issues in each befriending relationship^{vs}

Example:

Following an incident when a befriender collapsed while out with their befriender, one service now issues their befrienders with credit-card sized laminated emergency contact cards. The cards contain the befriender's name and photograph, plus relevant emergency contact numbers.

Involving befrienders and befriended

As well as being involved in befriending itself, some services offer opportunities for both befrienders and befriended to participate in the service in other ways.

Advantages of wider involvement include:

- ensuring that the service reflects the views of the people it works with
- creating a sense of ownership/belonging to a service
- enabling befrienders and befriended to make a positive contribution and to learn new skills
- to complement the work and skills of paid staff
- employing the skills, enthusiasm and dedication of volunteers who have applied to be befrienders but who are not suitable for the role

However, befrienders and befriended should not be asked to do work which is the responsibility of paid staff (see 'Volunteer Policy', p.26).

Possible areas for involvement

Areas in which the service could involve befriender and befriended include:

- advisory groups
- training
- organising social events
- promoting the service to potential volunteers, befriended, referral agencies and funders
- befriender or staff recruitment
- peer support
- service evaluation (including focus groups)
- contributing to newsletters and annual reports
- compiling directories of local activities and useful phone numbers
- fundraising
- external training/conferences (giving feedback to others)
- attendance and presentations at AGMs

It may not be feasible for befriendees and befrienders to participate in all these areas, or it may be more appropriate for them to be involved on an occasional basis rather than regularly.

Questions to consider

- How much training and support will be required to enable befriendees and befrienders to become involved in additional activities?
- Will participants fully understand and abide by the service policies (e.g. confidentiality; equality and diversity)?
- Do people want to engage with the service in this way?
- How much participation can the service support?

Example:

One service involves befriendees in their induction training for volunteers. This ensures that befriendees have a say in how befrienders are trained, gives volunteers valuable experience and allows staff to observe how the potential befrienders interact with people with learning disabilities.

Monitoring and evaluation ^{vs}

The definition of monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation can sometimes be confused. The processes are related but different.

Monitoring means collecting information on a day to day basis on what happens within the service: *'what do we do? How much of it do we do?'*



Evaluation involves making a value judgment on the basis of the monitoring information that has been gathered-e.g. by comparing it with targets and deciding whether or not the service has been successful in achieving its outcomes: *'is the service achieving what it set out to do?'*



It is vital to put effective monitoring systems in place from the beginning in order to be able to carry out a comprehensive evaluation later on.

It is often useful to think about how monitoring and evaluation will be carried out even earlier-i.e. when designing a service or when writing funding applications. The process of thinking about how something will be recorded and evaluated can help keep proposals realistic and ensure that outcomes are meaningful. Once a service has been in existence for a couple of years, funders will be looking for an in-depth systematic evaluation of the service to have been carried out.

Monitoring and evaluation terminology

There are many different expressions used in monitoring and evaluation. These can cause confusion, as different funders use the same words in slightly different ways, or use different words to mean the same thing. It is therefore important to:

- check what words and phrases your funders use and that you understand exactly what they mean by them
- explain clearly what you mean by each phrase when writing reports

The following list sums up the usual meanings of some of the common monitoring and evaluation phrases:

Aims/ outcomes	•statements which describe what the service sets out to achieve, e.g. 'to reduce the social isolation of people over 70 who live alone'
Baseline	•a measurement taken before a service begins e.g. how often a person leaves the house each week (this can then be compared to after receipt of service)
Targets	•statements about what will be achieved by a certain date (relates to aims)-e.g. 'service will recruit and train 12 volunteer befrienders by the end of year 1'
Outputs	•the activities or end products the service generates (relates to outcomes)-e.g. training courses, posters,open days, group outings
Indicators	•changes which are attributable to outputs and related to outcomes -e.g. '72% say that, as a direct result of having a befriender, they now take part in more social events'
Impact	•the overall effect a service has on its beneficiaries e.g. 'after receiving our service, befriendees will go out more frequently and will feel less socially isolated'
Stakeholders	• different groups who are involved with the service,e.g. befriendees , families/carers, befrienders, staff, trustees, funders, referrers
SMART	•Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound (usually in relation to outcomes)-e. g 'in 6 months, 5 older people are matched with befrienders'

Why is evaluation important?

Systematic evaluation (based on appropriate monitoring) is essential in order to:

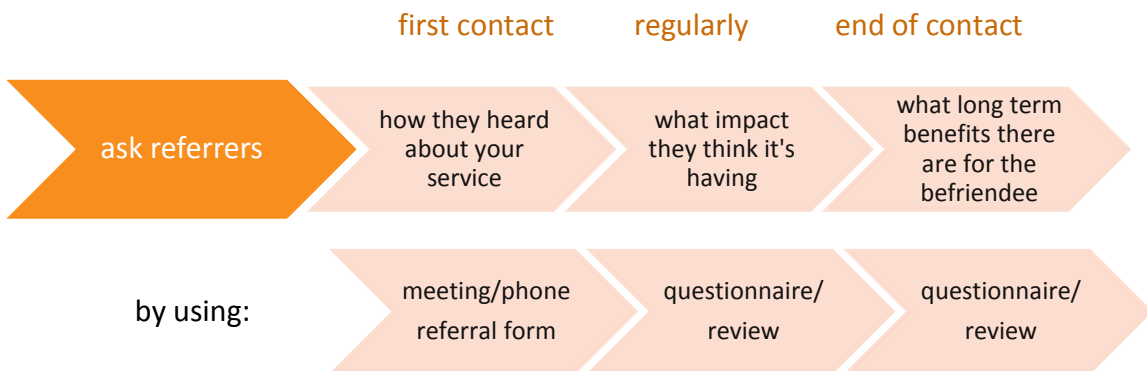
- ensure befriendees receive the best possible service
- ensure befrienders feel appropriately supported and benefit from their experience as volunteers
- provide relevant feedback to funders, management committee members, other stakeholders
- find out which areas of service delivery are strong and where improvement may be necessary
- ensure appropriate service development and good business planning

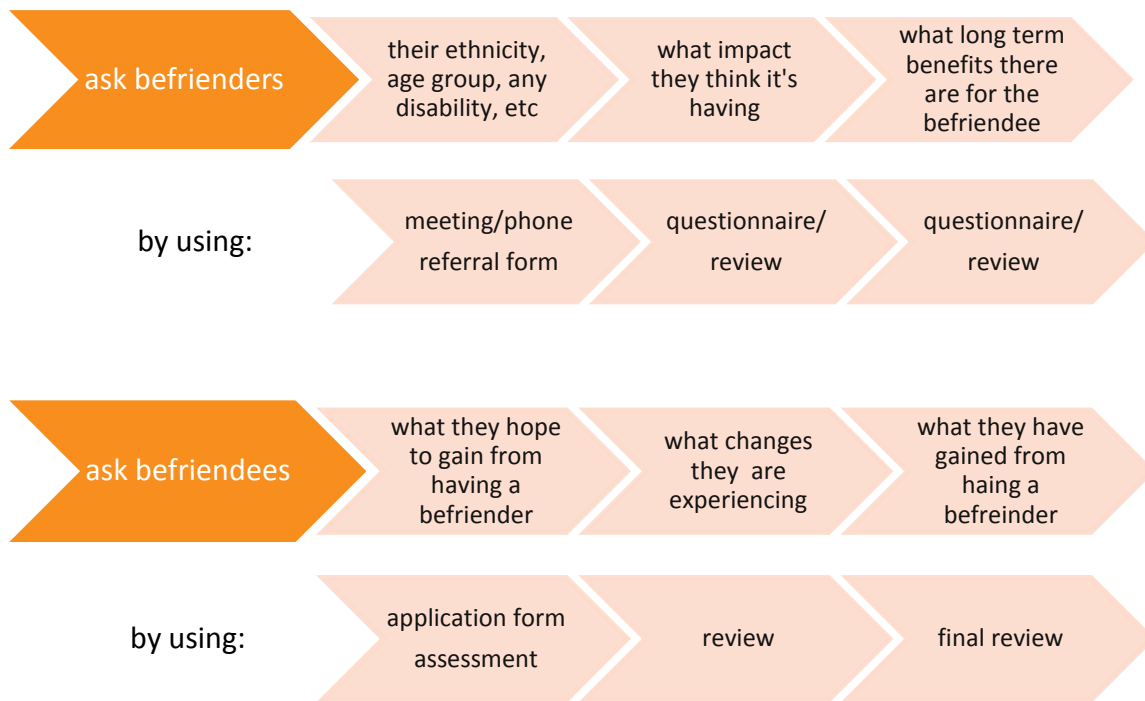
Setting up a monitoring and evaluation system

Think about:

- what the service is aiming to achieve for all its stakeholders, including befriendees, volunteers, staff and funders
- what information needs to be gathered (before, during and after the service has been provided) in order to assess whether or not the service has achieved each of these aims
- how to gather both quantitative (i.e. numerical, easy to measure) and qualitative (descriptive) information
- how and when these different pieces of information can be collected
- how the results will be analysed
- whether evaluations will be internal (i.e. carried out by staff/committee members/a volunteer with the appropriate skills) or external (i.e. commissioned for an independent organisation/consultant)
- how often evaluations will be conducted
- how the findings will be acted upon

Examples of when and how evidence may be collected:





Suggestions:

- download Evaluation Toolkit on www.befriending.co.uk.
- look at some sample evaluations on the BNs website.
- register for BNs' Vital Skill in Befriending: Monitoring and Evaluation' course: <http://www.befriending.co.uk/vitalskillsinbefriending.php>.
- ask BNs for support in setting up a monitoring and evaluation system.
- use the Befriender's assessment as a means for establishing their baseline (see the sample Assessment of Needs forms on the Resources section of the BNs website. A similar format can then be used to measure any changes or developments during reviews.).
- budget for an independent external evaluation every three to five years when preparing funding proposals.
- visit the Evaluation Support Scotland website www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk for information, resources, training and services.

Example:

When setting up, a mental health service was acutely aware that they would need to evaluate their work carefully in order to: satisfy funders' requirements, support matches effectively and be aware of any need to alter their procedures. They therefore set very clear indicators of success from the start, e.g. 'Befriendees go out more regularly' and 'befriendees tell us they are less isolated', and gathered baseline information (i.e. about how often befriendees went out and how isolated they felt) during assessments. This made it easy for the service to use befriender reviews to track any changes during the period of befriending.

Managing befrienders

Managing befrienders^{vs}

What is a befriender?

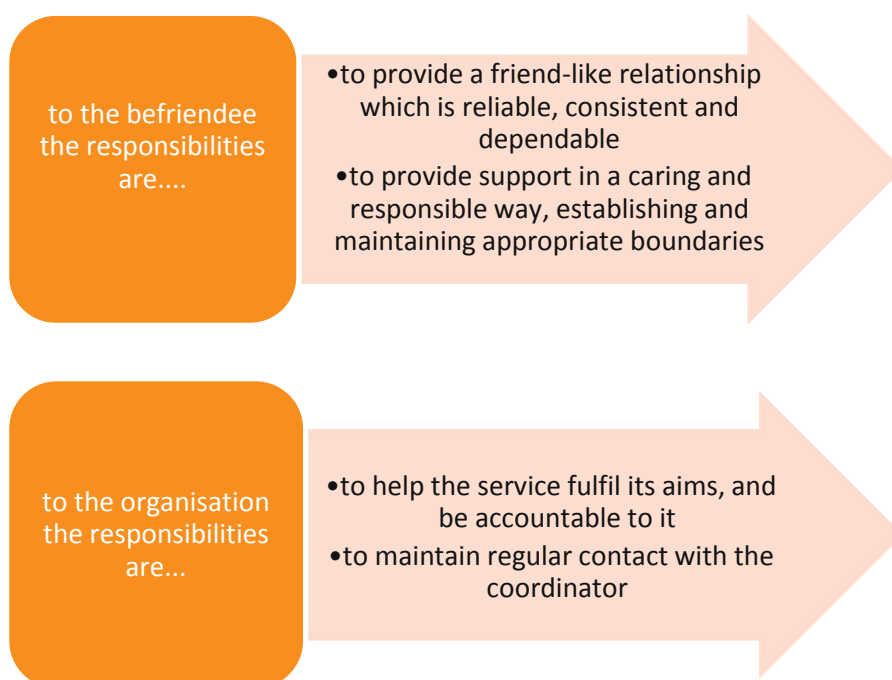
As with any volunteering role, it is helpful for services to think through what tasks they are asking befrienders to carry out and also what personal characteristics and experience is required.

Role

A befriender's role is to develop a trusting and supportive relationship with the person with whom they are matched.

Responsibilities

A befriender has responsibilities both to their befriender and to the organisation which manages their work:



Tasks

In order to carry out their role and fulfil their responsibilities, befrienders are usually asked to:

- complete a required programme of induction training (see 'Training befrienders', p.45)
- commit to spending time (in person or on the phone) with their befriender on a regular and planned basis
- plan activities with the befriender, as appropriate
- report back to service staff, as required (e.g. by e-mail after each meeting with the befriender)

- act in accordance with the service's administrative procedures
- attend regular support and supervision sessions with the service coordinator
- attend ongoing training and networking opportunities
- adhere to the boundaries set out by the organisation

Suggestion:

Compile a role description for befrienders to assist with volunteer recruitment, training and support and supervision. For an example, see:

http://www.befriending.co.uk/befriendinglibrary_more.php?id=125

Recruiting befrienders^{vs}

Not everyone will have the skills and aptitudes necessary to enable them to become a good befriender, so services should write a person specification before starting to recruit volunteers for this role. Each service should decide whether or not the person specification forms part of the application pack given to potential befrienders, or whether it is simply kept for staff to refer to. The desired characteristics of a befriender might be:

- a warm personality
- good communication skills (especially 1:1)
- reliability
- punctuality
- regular availability
- ability to make a commitment to the service for a specified length of time (e.g. a minimum of six months)
- ability to handle stress calmly
- ability to maintain confidentiality
- self-awareness and ability to reflect on their befriending relationship
- ability to use their initiative and work within guidelines without direct supervision
- awareness of the potential significance and importance of the befriending relationship for the befriender
- awareness of their own support needs within befriending
- empathy and understanding
- open-mindedness
- respect of other people's life choices, values and beliefs

Advertising

Most services will need to advertise for volunteer befrienders at some time. The following are some of the more common methods used:

- articles in the local press
- appeals on local radio stations
- stalls at volunteer recruitment fairs
- paid advertisements in papers and magazines
- social media, including BNs' Facebook page
- websites, including volunteer centres

Leaflets and posters in: local volunteer centres, community centres, leisure centres, libraries, GP surgeries, colleges/universities, supermarkets, churches.

Ensure staff are able to follow up any volunteer recruitment campaign responses immediately (e.g. have application packs ready to hand out). It is recommended that services monitor all forms of response mechanism e.g. phone, e-mail, social media posting.

Suggestion:

Before designing promotional materials to advertise for befrienders, look at what other organisations have produced (e.g. at the local volunteer centre or online) to judge what works well.

Think about what kind of people the service hopes to attract as volunteers, and target advertising (in terms of style, content and placement) accordingly (See 'Recruiting specific groups of volunteers', p.41).

Example:

A mental health charity had a stall at a summer fair and asked members of the public to complete a three-question mental health awareness quiz in order to enter a prize draw. Entrants were asked whether they wanted to receive further information about the charity's work. This exercise resulted in the recruitment of several volunteers, with the service already having some idea of the individuals' understanding of mental health issues.

Recruiting specific groups of volunteers

Although not subject to the same legislation as paid employees, the recruitment process should only be exempt from compliance with the equalities policy when there is an objectively justifiable reason, for example:

- in peer befriending, where the aim is to match people with similar characteristics

- when a specific positive role model is needed (e.g. male befriender for a child who has no positive male influence in their life)
- if the befriended group has a particular vulnerability (e.g. a female befriender for a woman who has experienced abuse by men)

Under-represented groups

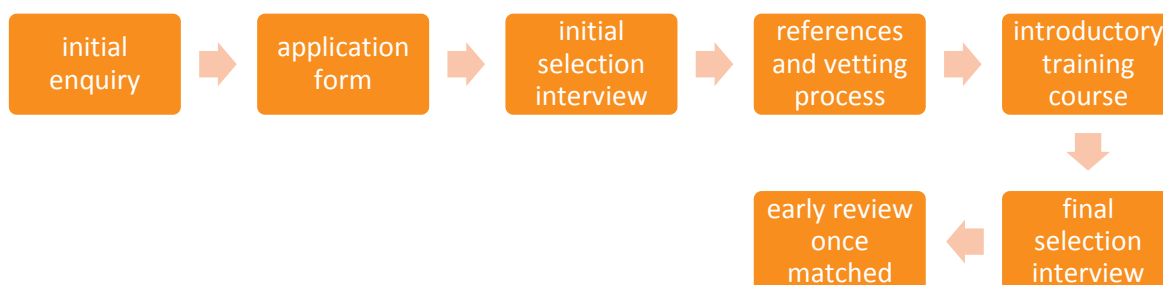
If services find that certain groups are under-represented among their volunteers (e.g. they have no benders who are from a particular ethnic minority/male/disabled), it is good equalities practice to advertise in ways and locations which are likely to appeal to those groups. This is an example of positive action.

There is no legal requirement to take positive action over volunteer recruitment and it would only constitute discrimination if someone was treated less favourably during the selection process because of their status or circumstances.

Selection of benders^{vs}

The selection process

Potential volunteers may be assessed against the criteria identified in the befriender person specification (see 'Recruiting benders', p.40). These qualities cannot be assessed fully during a simple question and answer session, so services can use many or all of the following stages of the recruitment process to help with this (although the order may vary slightly):



Contact with potential volunteers at each stage of the process, including during introductory training (see p.45) is an opportunity for staff to assess their suitability on an ongoing basis. It is important that the selection process is managed sensitively in accordance with the service's core aims and values, and its Equalities Policy.

Suggestion:

- try to ensure that the responsibility for selecting benders does not rest with one person
- try to involve more than one person in the interview and selection process of each applicant (e.g. during interviews or training)

- view the introductory training course as part of the selection process
- make it clear to applicants that an invitation to attend introductory training does not mean they will definitely be accepted as a befriender

Application form

Application forms are central to the selection of volunteer befrienders because they:

- formalise the selection process
- provide a record of the applicant's personal details (e.g. name, address, occupation, referees)
- present a personal statement of why the applicant wants to befriend and what they can offer
- can be used to acquire signed permission for the vetting process
- can be linked to Equalities Monitoring Forms
- provide confidential space for pre-check self-disclosure by the applicant

Initial selection interview

A selection interview offers applicants the opportunity to:

- explore their motivation for applying to be a befriender
- outline their life experience and how it may relate to the befriended group
- learn more about how the service works

It also allows services to:

- get to know applicants on a personal level
- observe applicants' interpersonal skills (often in a 1:1 setting)
- gauge applicants' understanding of the issues faced by the befriended group
- explain what is expected from a befriender and what support is provided by the service
- gather information about individual volunteers' skills, hopes and expectations before becoming a befriender-this baseline can then be compared with their experiences during and at the end of a match (see 'Monitoring and evaluation', p.33)

References

References allow services to obtain information on applicants' personalities, experience, skills and attributes from people who know them well.

References are usually requested in writing, ideally by using a standardised form. This ensures that important issues are addressed and that the same information is gathered

about each applicant. The questions asked should relate to the befriender role description or person specification.

References may be taken up at any stage in the selection process, but satisfactory references must have been received by the service before the applicant starts befriending. N.B. Under the Data Protection Act, there is a right of access by the subject to the information held about them. All references must be treated in confidence and both the referee and the subject of the reference should be aware of this policy.

Suggestions:

- give referees information about the service and what the befriender's role will be
- ask for referees who have known the applicants for at least two years
- take up at least two references for each applicant
- ensure that referees are not family members or partners
- keep signed copies of references
- consider asking for at least one professional/educational and one personal reference

Criminal records checks

These processes vary across the UK. In Scotland, PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) checks are managed by the Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS). In England and Wales the process is managed by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and in Northern Ireland by AccessNI (see 'Handling Vetting Information or Disclosures Policy', p20).

Final selection interview

This second interview:

- helps to make it clear to applicants that the induction training is part of the selection process
- gives services the chance to check with each individual what they have learned from their training, assess whether they are ready to become a befriender, and give them feedback on how they have performed during the rest of the selection process
- allows services to check out any concerns that may have arisen during the training process about an individual's suitability (asking another staff member, enhanced volunteer (see p.59) or Board member to attend will provide a second opinion)
- provides a confidential setting to help unsuccessful candidates think about other, more appropriate, volunteering opportunities

Suggestions:

If an applicant is turned down at any point in the process, or if they themselves decide that they aren't suited to the role of befriender, signpost them to other possible volunteering opportunities, either within the organisation or via the local volunteer centre.

Think about whether or not it is appropriate for people with personal experience of the befriended group's situation to become befrienders, and if so, whether there should be any restrictions on when they get involved. Consider including this information in recruitment materials.

Example:

One befriending service which works with people who have cancer does not allow relatives of people who have died from cancer to volunteer until some time after they have been bereaved. The service feels that the volunteer's motives may be confused, and they may not have completed enough of the grieving process to be effective, focussed volunteers.

Many mental health befriending services find that a large proportion of their volunteers have had experience of mental health problems and that the knowledge, empathy and understanding these people bring to their befriending is invaluable (see 'Peer befriending', p.10).

Training befrienders^{vs}

Introductory training

The provision of a course of introductory training for potential befrienders is a fundamental requirement. It is important that the coordinator has a lead role in the design and delivery of the training, as it facilitates relationship-building as well as sharing critical information about the service, and the roles and responsibilities of all involved. Introductory training usually forms part of the assessment process: if this is the case, it is important that potential volunteers are aware that this is happening. Volunteers should complete their introductory training before they are accepted as a befriender and before they are matched with a befriended.

Purpose

Services provide introductory training for volunteers in order to:

- explain the realities of being a befriender
- enable applicants to make informed choices about whether to become a befriender
- assess applicants' suitability for the role
- provide befriendees with befrienders who are suitably prepared

Course length

There is no definitive course length, but typically they will take place over a number of sessions in order to:

- test the commitment of befrienders before matching them
- cover subjects in sufficient depth
- allow staff time to build up a working relationship based on trust with each volunteer
- enable group processes to develop
- give service staff time to assess participants
- allow staff and participants the chance to reflect on the course content

Content

An introductory training course for befrienders usually involves the following:

- an exploration of volunteers' motivations, hopes and fears
- the service's definition of befriending and description of the befriender's role
- communication and listening skills
- relationship building
- boundaries within befriending ^{vs} (see 'Boundaries', p.65)
- beginnings and endings of befriending relationships ^{vs} (see 'Beginnings and endings' p.72)
- attachment, separation and loss
- befriender-group specific information (e.g. child protection or dementia awareness)
- attitudes and values, prejudice and discrimination, equality and diversity ^{vs}
- personal development/self reflection
- service policies and procedures

See: 'Befriender training topics checklist', p. 81.

Further training

It is good practice to offer further training on relevant topics once befrienders are matched.

This:

- furthers befrienders' personal development
- ensures any changes in policies and procedures are communicated to befrienders

- helps befrienders to meet one another, gain mutual support, feel part of the organisation, work better in their role, develop specialist skills and continue to feel motivated.

Suggestions:

- ensure service coordinators are trained as trainers ^{vs}
- compare the service's existing introductory training topics against the checklist (p.81)
- contact BNs to find out the variety of resources available, free or at a cost, to support your training
- invite existing befrienders and befriendees to an introductory training session to share their experiences
- ask befrienders to suggest topics for further training sessions
- think about whether or not all befrienders are required to attend further training

Example:

One service which works with elderly people offers their befrienders the opportunity to attend training which equips them to work with befriendees who have early stage dementia. This training includes information on: working with carers, communication, dealing with challenging behaviour, memory and reminiscence work. In addition, the service regularly runs sessions for volunteers on things that they might enjoy doing with their befriendees, e.g. making befriending diaries containing photos of trips out and things collected on those trips (leaves and pressed flowers from walks in the country; bus, theatre and cinema tickets, photos etc). The service also enables befrienders to attend courses which are particularly appropriate for their match, e.g. moving and handling.

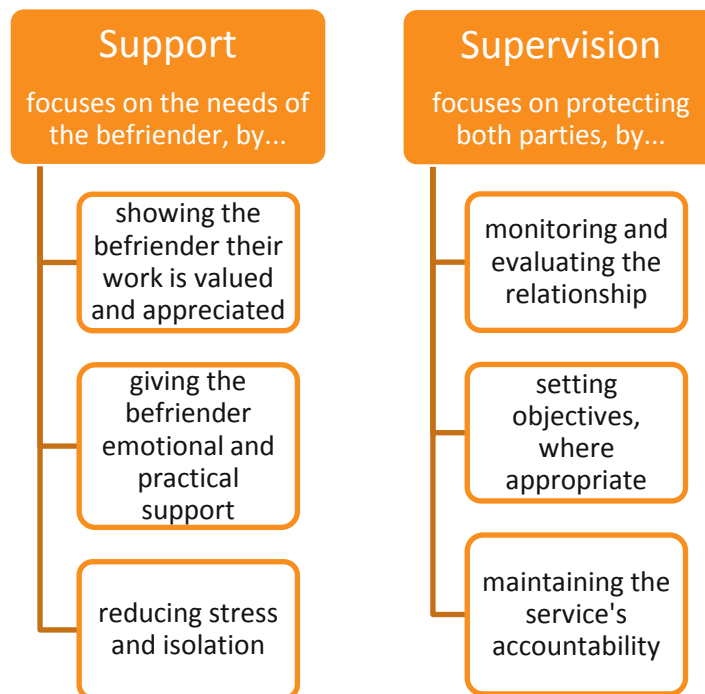
Supporting and Supervising Befrienders ^{vs}

Why do befrienders need ongoing support?

Befriending inherently takes place without direct supervision from either staff or peers. This means that being a befriender can be isolating and stressful, and it can be difficult for services to protect the needs and rights of both befrienders and vulnerable befriendees. Further, the nature of a befriending relationship inevitably changes over time (for example there may be pressure on both parties to adjust the boundaries that they initially set - see 'Changes to boundaries', p.69) and these changes need to be monitored by the organisation which is accountable for the relationship. Befrienders also need to know that their work is appreciated by the service.

Support and Supervision

Support and supervision are different aspects of the same process: support focuses on the needs of the befriender, whereas supervision focuses on ensuring the wellbeing and safety of both befriender and befriender, and also the service standards of the organisation.



Individual sessions

Scheduled, individual sessions are fundamental for adequately supporting and supervising befrienders⁸⁹. This is because:

- a personal relationship is built with a designated member of staff
- issues specific to each particular relationship can be explored appropriately and safely in confidence
- relationships can be monitored on a routine basis and any potential problems identified and tackled early, often before the befriender is aware of them
- relationships can be evaluated more easily over time, including the impact of the relationship on both befriender and befriender (see 'Monitoring and evaluation', p.33)
- services can ensure they are truly accountable for the service provided by their volunteers

Services should not forego scheduled sessions in the hope that befrienders will contact them in the event of any problems. This is not a reliable or safe practice, and by the time problems become evident, harm may have been done to the befriender, the befriender and/or their relationship. Also, as noted above, problem solving is only one of the many functions of support and supervision.

Equally, although it may appear to save time in the short term, group supervision alone cannot be relied upon as an efficient means of supporting volunteers. Befrienders may not

feel comfortable raising difficult or sensitive issues in a group setting and problems may therefore go unreported. There are also likely to be considerable problems surrounding confidentiality. Further, staff will not be sufficiently tuned in to each relationship to enable them to recognise potential problems before they develop.

Suggestions:

Arrange to have with each befriender a 1:1, face-to-face support and supervision session after they have been matched and then again at least every six months, with scheduled phone/e-mail support provided regularly between these meetings.

Aim to provide each befriender with one contact for approximately every four meetings with their befriender. Some of these sessions can take place on the phone. Make regular participation in a 1:1 support and supervision sessions a requirement of being a befriender. This requirement should be explicitly stated in a Befriender Agreement (a document signed by each volunteer once they have been accepted as a befriender or when they are first matched with a befriender) and/or during introductory training.

Follow-up contact

It is important to be aware of the possible need for occasional extra follow-up telephone, email or text contact, especially if there are some difficulties in the match or the befriender is new.

Group sessions

In addition to 1:1 support, there is great value in giving befrienders the opportunity to meet for group support sessions. They allow befrienders to:

- discuss common issues
- provide peer support
- learn new things
- feel less isolated
- feel that they belong to the wider organisation

Some services may decide that such sessions are compulsory, whereas others may offer occasional optional events.

Example:

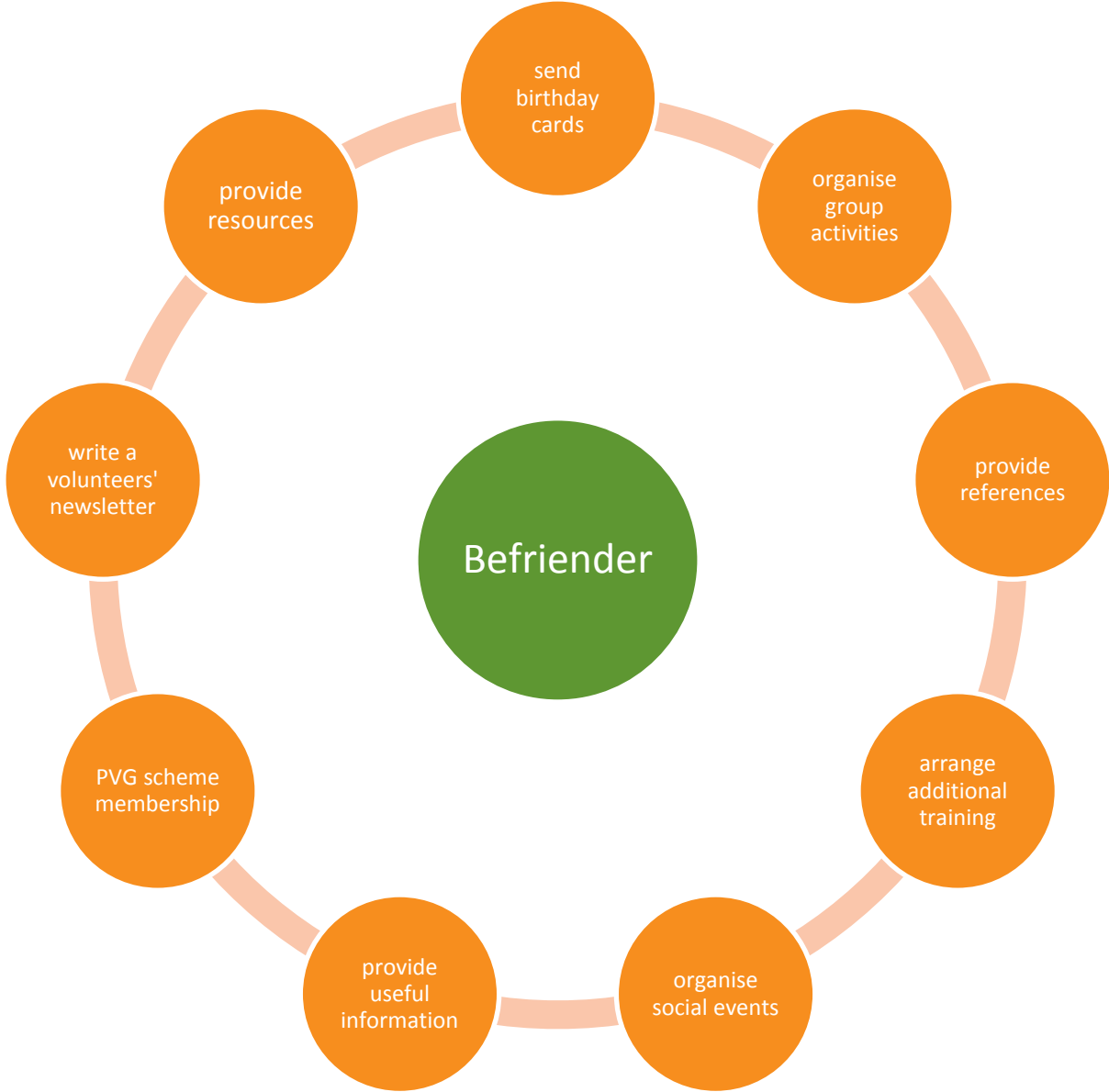
A young people's service gives their volunteers the chance to come together every two months. Attendance is high as it is made clear to potential befrienders at their initial interview that this is an important part of their commitment to the service. Sometimes these meetings include some further training, sometimes they do fun team-building activities (the drumming session was a real hit!) but mainly they provide the opportunity for befrienders to meet each other and share their experiences, swap good ideas and seek advice. This not only helps befrienders on a practical level, but also helps them feel connected to the service, keep motivated, and feel that they are an important part of the wider package of care provided for their befriended group. The meetings happen in the evenings and the service provides the befrienders with a snack.

Other Support Methods

There are many other ways that services can ensure their befrienders feel supported, stay motivated and feel that they are an important part of the organisation, for example by:

- putting on social events
- producing a newsletter
- providing ongoing training
- gathering and disseminating useful information on suitable activities in the local area
- external training/networking opportunities
- having service-specific resources available to borrow (e.g. memory boxes for older befriendeds, toy/book boxes for children)
- organising group activities for befrienders and befriendeds to participate in together
- remembering birthdays and sending a card
- providing references (usually after 6 months)
- PVG scheme membership (Scotland) which reduces costs for further checks needed for future volunteering or employment

Other ways to support befrienders



Befriendees

Referrals

Eligibility Criteria ^{vs}

Each befriending service has a specific population to which they can provide their service, determined by the interests / aims of the organisation and usually stipulated in funding agreements. The befriended group is usually defined both by being “socially isolated” and by fulfilling one or more other criteria, for example in relation to ages, disability, mental or physical health, sexual orientation, addiction, learning disabilities, location or ethnicity.

Suggestions:

Ensure that both eligibility criteria and the aims of the service (in terms of stated outcomes) are clearly defined and well publicised in order to ensure appropriate referrals^{g2}.

Learn about other local organisations so that inappropriate referrals can be signposted to other forms of support^{g3}.

Information for referrers

Potential referrers^{g2} should be made aware:

- of the eligibility criteria
- of how to make a referral and what will happen next
- that applying for a befriender must be the befriended’s choice

It can also be helpful for potential referrers to receive:

- case studies showing how befriending can benefit an individual
- a definition of the befriender’s role and its limitations
- a description of how befrienders are recruited, selected, vetted and trained
- copies of/extracts from relevant policies and procedures (e.g. equalities, complaints, waiting list, etc.)
- information on the length of the waiting list, and how people are prioritised

Suggestions:

- keep referrers informed of any changes in relevant policies, procedures or waiting times (see “Keeping people informed”, p59).

- make a point of contacting referral agencies on (at least) an annual basis to ensure they have up-to-date copies of promotional materials, contact details and other information, and to make sure you have a current named contact for their organisation.

Example:

One service holds an information event for all its referral agencies each year. These events allow staff to build relationships with referrers and to inform them about what the service provides. More importantly, however, the aim is also to try to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals and ensure that referrers can give befriendees an accurate understanding of what befriending is when they describe the service to them. The service sends out a summary of the discussions to all the referrers on their database

Information from referrers

Services must think about what information they need from referrers^{g4}, including any which may have implications for a befriender or befriendees' safety, or help the service make an appropriate match. It is important to be explicit about which parts of this information will be passed on to the befriender, bearing in mind the befriendees' right to confidentiality (see 'Confidentiality Policy', p19).

It is also useful to find out what referrers hope their befriendees will gain from having a befriender. This information can help services evaluate the success of the service for each individual befriendees (from the referrer's perspective) and may also provide some direction for future service development (see 'Monitoring and evaluation', p33).

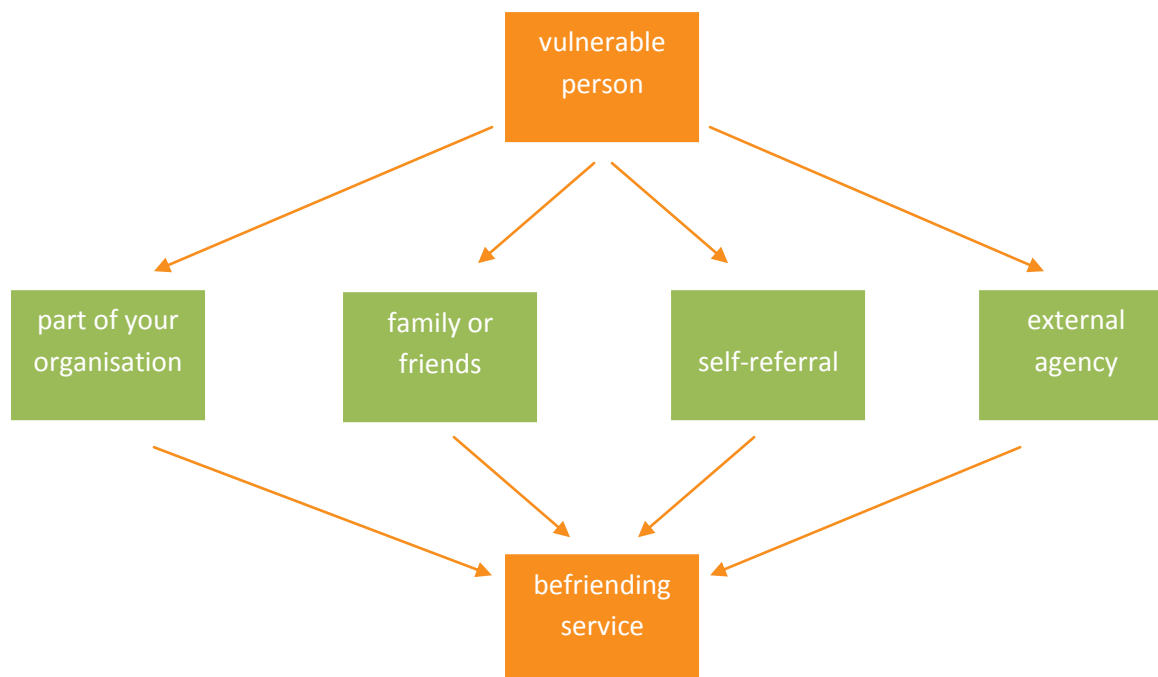
Suggestions:

See the Befriending Resources A-Z at www.befriending.co.uk for examples of referral forms.

Types of referrer

Services must decide who can refer befriendees^{g2} to them, e.g. other services within their own organisation; external agencies; friends / family^{g7}; befriendees themselves.

Referral routes



Suggestions:

- have clear procedures for receiving referrals from different sources
- be clear about what information will be recorded (both during the referral process and during the course of the match) and about who will have access to it
- ensure adequate background information is gathered to allow appropriate risk assessments to be conducted

Referral agencies

It is important to establish and maintain positive relationships with referral agencies^{g2} by ensuring regular personal contact and good communication. It can be helpful for referral agencies to be made aware that befriending has limitations, and there may still be the need for other forms of support.

Friends, family and self-referrals

If referrals are accepted from these sources^{g7}, it is important to be sure that:

- the eligibility criteria have been met
- the client has chosen to seek support from befriending
- the role of the befriender is made clear

- everyone understands what information will be shared with whom

Without the involvement of a referral agency there can be a lack of background information and services may need to find other ways of gaining enough information to make an appropriate assessment (see 'Safety: Befriender referrals, p.27) and match people effectively (see 'Issues to consider in matching' p.62). Befrienderes should be asked to give written consent before the service asks an external agency to supply such information, e.g. by signing an Information Sharing Agreement.

Example:

One service has designed a "Sharing of Information Agreement" form. Self-referring befrienderes who are over 18 use this form to list people they know who the service can contact for further background information. People listed may include members of their family or friends but the befriender is encouraged to include at least one person known to them on a professional basis who can contribute to the service's risk assessment.

Waiting lists^{vs}

Many befriending services receive too many referrals (see 'Staff/befriender ratios', p17) and have to operate a waiting list^{g19}. Services should consider how/if they will prioritise befrienderes - for example on the basis of the level of support needed, the urgency of the person's situation, and/or their geographical location. The importance of creating matches with the best possible chance of success (see 'Matching', p62) means that the suitability of available befrienders should dictate when someone is matched, rather than where they are on the list.

Managing waiting lists

Potential befrienderes (and their referrers) should be kept informed of how long they are likely to have to wait for a befriender. If it becomes likely that they are never going to be matched, it is unfair to keep them on the list - especially if they might be able to seek support from elsewhere.

There are three main ways of keeping waiting lists more manageable:

- developing tighter eligibility criteria
- closing the list when it reaches a certain length
- increasing turnover of befrienderes by e.g. encouraging shorter relationships or fixed length matches (e.g. 12 months) - N.B. this may not be appropriate for all groups.

Befriending services are increasingly finding imaginative ways to increase the capacity of their work, e.g. by introducing group or distance befriending.

Other strategies may include offering 'enhanced' or expert volunteering roles, where experienced volunteers are trained specifically in a role supporting a small number of other volunteers. Some befrienders, in addition, have more than one befriender. (Contact Befriending Networks for information about separate guidelines in respect of enhanced volunteering).

Suggestion:

Develop a well thought-through and reasoned waiting list policy and explain this to referrers and potential service users. If waiting lists become too long it may be necessary to review the policy.

Befriender assessments

Most services carry out initial face to face assessments^{g4} with potential befrienders in order to:

- check that they match the eligibility criteria
- give the befriender (and their family/carer/referrer as appropriate) information about how the service is run (including relevant policies and procedures)
- explain what a befriender's role is... and isn't, as this will help to ensure the befriender doesn't have unrealistic expectations (see 'Boundary guidelines', p66)
- explain what are appropriate boundaries within the befriending relationship (see "Boundaries" p.65)
- describe what will happen next
- describe how they will be introduced to their befriender
- explain what ongoing support they will receive from the service
- state who to contact in an emergency
- ensure the potential befriender (and their family, if appropriate) actually *wants* to have a befriender
- answer any questions
- find out what the befriender's preferences are regarding their match
- find out how often they'd like to meet
- find out the types of activities they'd like to do
- enable the coordinator to begin to get to know the person in order to be able to match them appropriately

- establish the 'baseline' (see 'Monitoring and evaluation', p.33) – i.e. what does the person (and their family/referrer, if appropriate) hope will be the benefit(s) of having a befriender?
- carry out a risk assessment relating to the individual and their home, if appropriate

Where possible, any information given about the responsibilities and roles of the befriender, befriender and service should be given in a written format so people can refer back to it over the course of their engagement.

The Purposes of assessments



Suggestions:

Have an assessment visit checklist which lists:

- the topics to cover
- the forms which need to be completed
- written materials which need to be given out

Ensure that information materials are written clearly and are accessible for the befriender: this may involve large print, coloured paper, symbols, etc. Before visiting, it is a good idea to ask whether the befriender can read standard print.

Keeping people informed

Referral agencies

Before matching^{g10}

Referral agencies should be told how long it is likely to be before the potential befriender is matched and should be kept informed of any further delays. It is important to establish how much ongoing involvement the referral agency plans to have with the befriender in order to facilitate harmonious working between agencies.

After matching^{g5, g11}

The type of feedback, if any, given to referrers about the befriending relationship will vary, depending on their requirements.

It is extremely important that befriendeds are aware of any ongoing communication between the service and the referrer and know what types of information will be passed on (see 'Confidentiality', p70). Some services may expect referral agencies to take part in relationship reviews and, likewise, some referrers will ask befriending service staff to participate in their own review processes.

Where the referral agency maintains contact with the befriender and may be aware of changes in their circumstances, it should be agreed that they keep services up to date with any change which might have an impact on the befriender's activities. Befriendeds should be made aware of this arrangement.

Befriendeds (and their carers / family where appropriate)

Before matching

Befriendeds need to be provided with clear, accessible information on the service they can expect to receive and details of who to contact if they have any questions. They should also be kept informed about:

- whether the organisation offers any other services to people on their waiting list (eg group activities)
- what information will be sought about them from other people and who those people would be^{g6}
- what the matching process entails and why there may be a wait involved

Where appropriate, this information should be provided in writing.

After matching

In addition to meeting their befriender and having ongoing contact with the service coordinator during regular reviews^{g12}, befriendeds should be officially notified of any changes to service policies or procedures which will impact on their experience of the

service. They should also be given adequate warning of any alterations to the level of service they are receiving and, if possible, of the end of their befriending relationship (see 'Endings', p.72). Again, this information should be provided in writing, where possible.

Suggestion:

Service coordinators should hold regular review meetings with befriendees. The befriender should not be present during these meetings. BNs recommends holding a review after the first three or four meetings between the befriender and their befriender, and then at least every six months. These meetings allow services to:

- check how the befriender feels about their match
- gather information for monitoring and evaluation purposes
- give the befriender updates on relevant service developments
- assess whether or not it is appropriate for the match to continue

Matches

Matches

Matching^{vs}

Matching involves deciding which befriender will work with which befriender based on the coordinator's assessment of the suitability of each person to form a relationship with the other.

The importance of matching

The aims of careful matching are to:

- ensure that relationships are given the best opportunity to become established
- meet the needs and expectations of all parties
- ensure that service staff feel able to be accountable for the relationships they support

The decision making process

The decisions on matching should be carried out by staff who have met both the befriender and befriender, and are therefore aware of their needs and expectations as well as the personalities involved. Matching decisions may be clearer if they are discussed with a third party (e.g. colleague, manager or management committee member) and there should be a written note made about the rationale for the match.

Group events which allow bidders and bidders to meet informally may also help coordinators make matching decisions, although it is important that these occasions are handled very sensitively in order to avoid raising false expectations. Service coordinators should explore any 'naturally occurring' matches carefully in order to ensure that normal matching criteria apply, although some organisations specifically choose this method if it is considered appropriate for their specific service.

Suggestion:

Download the sample matching checklist from www.befriending.co.uk. This form allows service coordinators to plot reasons for and against a proposed match in respect of both the befriender and befriender

Issues to consider in matching

The issues involved in matching bidders with bidders are varied and complex. Issues which may need to be taken into account include:

- the experience and abilities of both parties
- personalities and attitudes

- availability – how close they live to one another (unless distance befriending) and the times they are both available
- common interests
- opinions of the befriender's carer(s) / relative(s), if appropriate
- safety of the befriender and the befriender

Services should think about which choices it is appropriate for befrienderes to make about who they are matched with. This should be done in the context of the service's equalities policy [see p.23]. For example, if a befriender is encouraged to say if they would prefer to be matched with someone of a similar age to themselves or only want a befriender of the same gender, services should consider whether or not it is also acceptable for them to say that they only want to be matched with someone of the same ethnicity or sexuality. Some services are clear that this would constitute discrimination and would not offer the befriender this choice. Some might even withdraw the offer of service if the befriender insisted on choosing a befriender based on protected characteristics without an acceptable rationale. Others allow the befriender to make this type of choice. However, two points are of relevance in this regard:

1. Befrienders should not be exposed to situations where they are likely to be treated negatively.
2. All matching decisions must be congruent with the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy, and if a case for objective justification can be made, this should be recorded (p.22).

If befrienderes' preferences mean they are likely to wait some time before a match can be found, they should be made aware of this (see 'Waiting lists', p56).

Gut feeling

Often the matching of a specific befriender with a befriender will 'feel right'. Whilst these feelings can be helpful, it is important to try to clarify and articulate the underlying reasons in writing. Matching should not be based on 'gut feeling' alone, but should allow a much more detailed consideration of the relevant issues and, possibly, the involvement of a second member of staff, volunteer or management committee member.

Example:

One children's service has worked hard to develop its matching techniques. Their befrienderes have already faced a lot of disappointment and rejection in their lives and so the service is very aware of the need to make the best possible matches. The service coordinator spends time getting to know each referred child - usually taking them out on a trip themselves. Volunteer training takes 15 hours to give staff time to get to know the potential befrienders well. Staff say: "Although we are often guided by our 'gut

feeling' about a match, we have to justify our decisions to both referrers and parents. It's not enough to say 'it just feels right', we have to think about why it feels right." Matching decisions therefore include careful consideration of whether the volunteer has the skills and attributes to enable them to form a strong bond with the child. If so, what are these attributes? Are they particularly good at listening, or able to deal calmly with a child who is hyperactive? Are they good at sensitively drawing a withdrawn child out of themselves? These questions enable the service to know what underpins their 'gut feelings' about who will make a good match.

Information sharing^{g13}

The matching process will begin with the sharing of one party's personal information by the coordinator, with the other. Organisations should discuss with befrienders and with befriendees which information may be shared with the other party before they meet (see 'Confidentiality', p.70 and 'Confidentiality Policy', p.19).

Organisations may choose to ask befrienders and befriendees to write profiles or complete questionnaires on themselves so that written information can be given to the person they are matched with before an introduction meeting is organised.

First meetings

Both befrienders and befriendees may be apprehensive about their first meeting (see 'Beginnings', p72). Staff should:

- ensure that their first meeting is held in a location where both parties are likely to feel comfortable
- ensure both parties know the expected length of the meeting
- be present (at least at the start) in order to introduce both parties to one another, establish practical issues and clarify any outstanding questions

Suggestions:

- develop and implement clear, recorded matching procedures
- base matching decisions on a thorough examination of relevant issues and on the preferences and personalities of all involved
- discuss matching decisions with a third party, if possible
- offer both parties choice, in line with the service's Equality and Diversity Policy
- try to ensure that first meetings are as comfortable as possible
- after the initial meeting, take the opportunity to go through the Befriending Agreement with each party individually, ensuring that each of them is clear about what they are signing up to and enabling them to reflect before signing

Boundaries^{vs}

Boundaries in relationships are limits which everyone sets (unconsciously or consciously) which govern what people share of themselves, what they do together and how they manage their interactions at home, work and socially.

In befriending

Well-managed, explicit boundaries are fundamental to good befriending practice and should be seen as a positive concept rather than a restrictive barrier. They help to:

- ensure the protection and safety of both parties
- establish a safe, dependable setting for developing a befriending relationship based on trust
- define where befrienders stand on issues of confidentiality, conduct and working limits
- avoid dependency
- prevent the breakdown of relationships

Setting policies on boundaries

In order to take into account different perceptions about boundaries, services should involve a range of people when setting / reviewing boundaries, policies and guidelines, eg befrienders, befriendees, management committee members and referral agencies.

Befriender training, support and supervision

Services should:

- help befrienders prepare for having befriending boundaries tested by exploring different scenarios in their training
- ask befrienders to explore their own personal and professional boundaries and consider why the service may be laying down boundaries which are different
- encourage befrienders to think about how to resist pressure to take on inappropriate roles
- work with individual befrienders to set boundaries for their relationship that sit with organisational policy
- be aware that some befrienders and befriendees may need more support than others to recognise, understand the reasons for, and keep boundaries
- regularly review boundaries and the role of the befriender within each relationship
- ensure both parties are aware of the implications if they develop a relationship which moves outside the service's parameters, including the end of expenses, no insurance cover and no further responsibility on the part of the service (see 'Beginnings and endings', p.72)

Setting the boundaries

It is important for both befrienders and befriendeds to know that a service has general boundaries for all its befriending relationships, but may also have boundaries specific to each relationship, relating, for example, to risk assessments.

Services should:

- ensure boundaries are established from the outset
- be able to refer back to baseline boundaries if difficulties arise
- reinforce the importance of boundaries in a variety of ways: individually with befriendeds during their assessment, with befrienders during their interview and training, with both parties at matching meetings, in written material (e.g. befriender handbook), during support and supervision and during reviews

If boundaries are becoming progressively blurred within a match, it may be an indication that a genuine friendship is developing between both parties, and it may be time for the service to consider ending its involvement. (see 'Endings', p.72).

Suggestions:

Ask befrienders and befriendeds to sign a simple written Befriending Agreement (which can be referred to during reviews and when resetting altered boundaries) which outlines:

- what the service expects from both parties during befriending meetings
- the type of befriending activities which are appropriate

Write guidelines / statements to explain expected working practices for befrienders (see 'Boundary guidelines', p.66).

Boundary guidelines

Services should write guidelines and appropriate case studies on the following potentially difficult areas and use them to inform referrers and befriendeds, as a part of volunteer training and during befriender support and supervision. These guidelines should also be included in the volunteer handbook. Guidelines might include such issues as the minimum time commitment expected; how often meetings should take place; the approximate length of each meeting, and how long travel, training and supervision time might take over and above this basic commitment. They might also include information about how holidays and sickness will be responded to (e.g. whether the befriended will be offered additional support) and what notice should be ideally given of planned absences. They should also

contain clear guidance for both befrienders and befriendeds about what to do if the behaviour of the other party fails to respect agreed boundaries during befriending visits. All parties should be aware of the organisation's Complaints Policy.

Personal details

Guidelines should cover whether or not befrienders can give their contact details to befriendeds, and if not, how meeting arrangements will be facilitated. If befrienders can give out their details, they need to be aware of what the possible implications are, at what stage in the relationship it is appropriate to give this information, and what limitations they might put in place (e.g. suitable and unsuitable times to call). Consideration might be given to whether it is appropriate to have an imbalance in the information shared between each party (i.e. the befriender has the befriended's contact number or home address but not vice versa).

Involvement of friends and relatives

It is not good practice for the befriender to introduce their friends and relatives to the befriended. While it may seem to them to be a positive development which widens the befriended's circle of social contacts, it must be pointed out that it also:

- moves the relationship away from the principle of 1:1
- introduces people who have not been selected, trained or vetted by the service
- can compromise safety - for example, if there is an accident the befriender may focus on the welfare of their family rather than that of the befriended (see 'Safety: Other people', p.28)
- may cloud confidentiality issues (see 'Confidentiality', p.70)

Chance encounters may occur when a match is spending time together and these should not be a cause for concern, though services may want to advise both befriender and befriended to discuss a strategy to deal with these, which would make them both comfortable, e.g. if asked "So how do you know each other?".

There needs to be discussion about to what extent, if at all, befrienders might become involved with the friends and relatives of befriendeds. While this can be for legitimate reasons, it can also complicate matters, e.g. befrienders may find themselves drawn in to providing support to more than one person. Services need to be prepared to offer guidance and practical suggestions in order to prevent problems and deal with them promptly should they arise (see 'Other people', p28).

Location - Where befrienders and befriended meet

Relationships develop better in places where both parties feel comfortable, are mutually suitable, accessible to both people and provide appropriate privacy (if confidential issues are likely to be discussed).

Finance

Without boundaries, money issues can easily have serious implications for the befriending relationship, including bad feeling, dependency or exploitation. Services should state their position on:

- loans between befrienders and befriendeds
- handling money on behalf of the befriended (e.g. withdrawing money from ATMs)
- befrienders regularly paying for their befriended's activity
- gifts (services may wish to stipulate a value limit and/or restrict these to occasions such as birthdays)

Alcohol^{g14}

Services are advised to offer guidelines on:

- whether or not befrienders and befriendeds can drink alcohol together and if so, how much
- whether specifically going out for a drink together (as opposed to having one as part of another activity) is acceptable
- what action the befriender should take if the befriended is drunk when they meet or becomes drunk during the time they spend together
- what action the befriender should take if the befriended's parent/carer/guardian etc. appears to be drunk

Example:

One service which works with young adults specifies that befrienders and befriendeds can go to the pub in order to take part in a specific activity (eg to play pool, do a pub quiz, or join in a karaoke evening). While they are together the befriended is allowed to have one alcoholic drink, however the volunteer must not have any. If the befriended decides to have a second drink the meeting must end.

Intimate/sexual relationships

The development of a match into a romantic or sexual relationship would clearly represent a shift in boundaries beyond befriending, and it should be made clear to both parties that the match must cease. There should be consideration of what action, if any, the service takes in

the event of this situation arising (i.e. whether it is appropriate to remain involved with either party).

Feedback to referrers

The service needs to determine what its boundaries are in relation to providing feedback on befriending relationships to other agencies^{g15} (see 'Referrals', p.53 and 'Referral agencies', p.59).

Suggestions:

- define the befriender's role clearly in writing to everyone from the start
- define specific boundaries within the befriending relationship clearly to all concerned
- provide guidelines to cover situations commonly experienced by befrienders and include these in the befrienders' handbook
- ensure befrienders are aware of their responsibility to work within the service's guidelines
- make 'boundaries' an integral part of introductory training for volunteers
- use befriender support and supervision as a time to review boundaries

Changes to boundaries

Relationships may change over time and it should be remembered that such changes are often positive (e.g. due to an increase in trust). A change may result in the need to establish new boundaries - for example if the befriender and befriender decide to exchange phone numbers, the service may need to help them agree at what times it is acceptable for them to ring each other, so that there is a point of reference for all parties if the agreement is not adhered to.

If there are significant changes in the befriender's circumstances (e.g. in relation to health, family situation, or need for extra support), the boundaries may change beyond expectations and the befriender should be given the choice about whether or not to continue the befriending relationship. If boundaries change to the detriment of the relationship / people involved, the service should renegotiate these boundaries with both parties, where possible. If no satisfactory resolution can be found (from everyone's point of view), the relationship should be ended sensitively (see 'Endings', p.72).

Suggestion:

Service staff should continue to explore the boundaries of each match during befrienders' support and supervision sessions, and in befriender's reviews.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important issue for befriending services because:

- the service will have access to personal information on staff, befrienders and befriendees
- befriendees may tell their befrienders about sensitive issues

It is really important that the befriender understands their obligation to pass everything on to the coordinator, and that the befriendees know this from the outset.

Each service should therefore have a clear, written confidentiality policy in order to protect the best interests of staff, befrienders and befriendees (see 'Confidentiality Policy', p.19). Breaches of confidentiality must be investigated and appropriate action taken in accordance with the Confidentiality Policy and, if appropriate, the service's Disciplinary Policy (see p.19).

N.B. Befriendees are not usually asked to adhere to a confidentiality policy.

Suggestion:

See sample confidentiality policy on www.befriending.co.uk.

Length of relationship^{vs}

Befriending services fall into one of three categories - they offer fixed-term, open-ended or successive befriending relationships. There are distinct advantages and issues associated with each type and some befriendees may tend to suit one more than the other.

Fixed-term befriending^{g16}

This type of service makes it clear from the beginning to all parties involved that the befriending relationship will only be supported by the service for a set period of time.

Advantages

- both parties can be more motivated to make the most of the opportunities the match gives them
- the end of the relationship tends to be easier to manage- it is imposed on all relationships by the service, so neither the befriender nor the befriendees is likely to feel rejection, and it can be made easier to make endings seem like a celebration of achievement rather than a failure
- it can be easier to recruit volunteers for a fixed term commitment (although obviously they can go on to support a subsequent befriendees if they wish to continue volunteering)

- waiting lists are kept shorter, and a service can be provided to a larger number of people over a period of time

Typical fixed-term services:

- restricted age range (e.g. children in transition between primary and secondary school)
- those with a more goal-orientated focus (see 'The befriending-mentoring spectrum', p.?)
- home from hospital services

Open-ended befriending

In this case, a befriending relationship continues for as long as the befriended, their family/carers (if appropriate), the befriender, and the service all agree that it should. Some services are explicit that they will regularly review whether or not each match should continue (e.g. those which are more goal-focused may support matches on a rolling six month basis). Others tend not to consider ending a befriending relationship unless one of the parties involved has indicated that they want it to stop⁸¹⁷, or the match has evidently developed into an independent friendship which no longer requires the service's support and supervision (see 'Setting the boundaries', p.66 and 'Endings' p72).

Advantages

- the befriending relationship can develop slowly, building trust without any time pressures
- befriendeds who may need many months to get the most out of the relationship are given the opportunity to maximise the benefit they receive
- people who are likely to continue to be socially isolated can receive ongoing support: this situation may be typified by people who are housebound.

Successive befriending

A few services recognize the need for ongoing support for their befriendeds, perhaps throughout their lives, but believe that this is best provided via successive, time-limited matches with different befrienders.

Advantages

- increased social contact
- a range of activities
- avoidance of dependency
- appropriate for volunteers who cannot commit to open-ended befriending

Services which take this approach might include those who work with people more susceptible to social isolation (e.g. people with learning disabilities).

Beginnings and endings^{vs}

It is important for service coordinators to think carefully about how to handle both the beginnings and endings of befriending relationships - acknowledging the potential stresses involved in each. The successful handling of beginnings gives relationships the best chance of success, and the sensitive management of endings can ensure that both befriendeds and befrienders view the times they had together positively and celebrate their achievements rather than dwelling on the end itself as some kind of failure or negative development.

Beginnings

The way in which a relationship starts often sets the tone for what is to follow. Staff must be sensitive to this, monitor how the match is developing and provide the necessary support. Early on, befrienders and befriendeds may require more support from the service in order to build their confidence and staff should be aware of the possibility of teething problems.

At the beginning of each befriending relationship both the befriender and the befriended will be aware that there is the potential for rejection. It is therefore likely that both parties will be a bit anxious or nervous at the beginning, and it is common for both people involved to worry that the other person may not like them.

Suggestion:

Give each relationship a trial period (eg three or four meetings) with a high level of support from the Service Coordinator and then review the situation to allow both the befriender and the befriended to comment on the suitability of the match.

Endings

Well-managed endings for befriending relationships are also extremely important. Unless dealt with appropriately and positively there is the potential to undo a lot of the good work achieved throughout the match.

Endings are potentially very difficult because they can evoke a range of intense (and possibly conflicting) emotions for everyone involved, including:

- loss, sadness, grief
- fear
- failure
- relief
- guilt
- achievement

It can be particularly difficult when the befriender and befriendee have very different reactions to the end of the relationship. For example, one person might be feeling (guilty) relief, while the other person is grieving for the loss of the relationship. It should be remembered that befrienders can potentially feel the loss of a befriending relationship just as much as befriendees, and will be responding to the befriendee's feelings as well as their own. They should therefore be offered extra support at this time.

However, endings can also often be a reason to celebrate and to look forward to the future, especially if the relationship has been successful and has achieved some of its aims, for example enabling an individual to 'move on', or if the match has developed into a genuine friendship and both people feel they no longer need the service's input.

Signs that an official match may be nearing its end include:

- the befriender sees less need for support and supervision sessions
- the befriender submits fewer reports
- meetings take place less often
- the link between the people involved is stronger than either person's link to the service
- either or both parties are reluctant to take part in reviews
- boundaries have shifted significantly and are no longer determined by the service

Suggestion:

Acknowledge explicitly to both the befriender and the befriendee that endings can be difficult and allow them to express the range of feelings they are experiencing.

Planned endings

Ideally, endings should always be known about in advance and all parties given sufficient time to:

- deal with the emotions involved
- reflect on what the relationship has meant for them
- plan for the future

Suggestions:

- make the importance of planned endings explicit to volunteers during their training
- reinforce the importance of planned endings during support and supervision
- ask both befriendees and befrienders to give the service a minimum period of notice (eg four weeks) before ending their involvement, if possible. (This may not

be the same for both groups)

- work towards planned endings by helping befrienders and befriendeds identify what has been successful about their relationship.
- encourage the befriender and befriended to mark their last meeting with a special 'celebration' or event, if appropriate.

Unplanned endings

Occasionally the befriender or befriended may terminate the relationship without notice. An abrupt ending by the befriender may be experienced by the befriended as rejection, abandonment or even punishment, particularly if the befriending relationship has been one of their few experiences of building up trust. It is crucial that any such feelings are recognised and responded to. Similarly befrienders may feel very rejected, start doubting their ability and be put off volunteering in the future if their befriended decides to end the match without warning. Coordinators should act quickly to offer support to both people involved in these circumstances.

In exceptional circumstances the service may have to terminate the relationship for the welfare of either person. Such circumstances must be carefully managed.

Sometimes the relationship will be ended by the death of the befriended (or, less commonly, of the befriender). Some services are likely to have to deal with this more frequently than others (e.g. if befriendeds are elderly or seriously ill).

Suggestion:

If the service is particularly likely to have to deal with bereavement, provide training for befrienders on coping with bereavement and for staff on supporting bereaved people.

Decision to end

Ideally endings should be a mutual decision between the befriender and the befriended. Staff can use befriender support and supervision (see 'Supporting and supervising befrienders', p.47) and befriended reviews (see 'Keeping people informed: Befriendeds...' p.59) to help both parties reflect on and evaluate the purpose of their relationship. It is important not to let relationships drift on through an unhealthy dependency, or simply because broaching the notion of ending feels uncomfortable.

Once the match does end it is important that a written statement is sent to both parties (and the referral agency, where appropriate) clarifying that the service is no longer accountable for the relationship. It is important to help both the befriended and the befriender explore

their motivations and expectations if they decide they want to keep in contact with each other after the official match has ended.

Suggestions:

- do not ignore any signs that the relationship has run its course
- recognise that some individuals may find endings and the associated feelings particularly difficult
- make it clear from the start to everyone involved that the service has the right to end the formal relationship in particular circumstances (e.g. if the befriender no longer fits the service criteria)
- once a match has ended, write to everyone involved (befriender, carers/family if appropriate, referrer) stating that the service is no longer accountable for the relationship
- if either the befriender or befriender leaves without notice, ensure that appropriate support is provided to the individual who has been let down
- ensure that both parties fully understand what the end of their match means and ask them to sign an Ending Agreement which spells out the implications of no further service involvement in any future meetings (i.e. no insurance, no expenses, no service responsibility)
- consider what information to give to referral agencies after matches end, e.g. a summary of the befriending relationship and its achievements
- ask the befriender and befriender if they'd like to be kept on the service's mailing list to receive newsletters etc

Appendices

Appendices

Checklists

Not every service will need to have all of the policies, printed materials or forms listed here (and this list is not exhaustive): however it is worth making a conscious decision about whether or not to have each one. The checklists may be used to note whether that item is in place already, whether it is needed, and when it is due for review. Some policies are essential for all befriending services; whereas others will depend on the practice of the particular service (e.g. a driving or photography policy may not be applicable). Other relevant documents can be added at the bottom of each checklist. There are samples of many of these materials available to download from the resources section of the BNs website: www.befriending.co.uk.

Policies checklist

Policy Name	Page	In place?	Needed?	Review month
Anti-bullying/Dignity at work policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Disciplinary and Grievance Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Confidentiality Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Data Protection Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Complaints Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Handling Vetting Information/Disclosure Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Driving Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Equality and Diversity Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Financial Management Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Health & Safety Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Lone Working Policy (Staff & Volunteers)		yes / no	yes / no	
Photography Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Protection of Children / Vulnerable Adults / Vulnerable Groups Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Support & Supervision Policy (Staff & Volunteers)		yes / no	yes / no	

Training & Development Policy (Staff & Volunteers)		yes / no	yes / no	
Volunteer Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
Waiting List Policy		yes / no	yes / no	
		yes / no	yes / no	
		yes / no	yes / no	
		yes / no	yes / no	
		yes / no	yes / no	
		yes / no	yes / no	

Service documentation checklist

Name of the material	In place?	Needed?	Review month
General information leaflet	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender person specification	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender role description	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender recruitment poster	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender recruitment leaflet	yes / no	yes / no	
Information for referrers ⁸³	yes / no	yes / no	
Background information for befriendees	yes / no	yes / no	
Detailed Information for accepted befriendees	yes / no	yes / no	
Information for befriender's family / carers	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender handbook	yes / no	yes / no	
Boundary guidelines	yes / no	yes / no	
Organisational diagram	yes / no	yes / no	
Management Committee induction pack	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	

Forms checklist

Name of the Form	In place?	Needed?	Review month
Befriender application form	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender referral form ^{g2}	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender application form	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender reference form	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender self-disclosure form	yes / no	yes / no	
PVG Scheme Membership application form or regional equivalent (CRB check)	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender interview notes form	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender training record	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender expenses form	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender contact form	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender support & supervision form	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender assessment form ^{g4}	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender assessment checklist	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender information sharing agreement form ^{g18}	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriending agreement form	yes / no	yes / no	
Parental / guardian / carer consent form (if appropriate)	yes / no	yes / no	
Matching form	yes / no	yes / no	
Photography consent form	yes / no	yes / no	
Relationship review form	yes / no	yes / no	
Training evaluation form	yes / no	yes / no	
Ending agreement form	yes / no	yes / no	
Review questionnaires (for befrienders, befriendees, referrers, etc)	yes / no	yes / no	

Befriender training topics checklist

Training topic	In place?	Needed?	Review month
Attachment / separation and loss	yes / no	yes / no	
Attitudes and values	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender's role description	yes / no	yes / no	
Beginnings and endings	yes / no	yes / no	
Boundaries	yes / no	yes / no	
Befriender group-specific information	yes / no	yes / no	
Communication and listening skills	yes / no	yes / no	
Complaints / Grievance Policy	yes / no	yes / no	
Confidentiality Policy	yes / no	yes / no	
Emergency procedures	yes / no	yes / no	
Equality and diversity	yes / no	yes / no	
Expenses Policy	yes / no	yes / no	
Health and Safety Policy	yes / no	yes / no	
Lone Working Policy	yes / no	yes / no	
Personal development / self reflection	yes / no	yes / no	
Relationship building	yes / no	yes / no	
The definition of befriending	yes / no	yes / no	
Befrienders' motivations, expectations, hopes and fears	yes / no	yes / no	
Adult/child protection	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	
	yes / no	yes / no	

About Befriending Networks

Befriending Networks is a UK-wide organisation set up to support a wide membership of organisations, across the UK and beyond, that provide befriending services.

Our vision

Befriending Networks envisages a society in which high quality befriending support is accessible to all in need and its importance in reducing social isolation, promoting wellbeing, and building community cohesion is recognised.

Our mission

Befriending Networks exists to:

- provide a high standard of information, training, quality development, consultancy in relation to befriending
- raise the profile and understanding of befriending among politicians, commissioners, funders and members of the public in order to increase their understanding of befriending within a continuum of social care provision
- support the delivery of high quality befriending services
- maintain an effective and supportive network among its constituent members

Benefits of membership

Members of the Network are entitled to the following benefits:

- Befriending Resource Pack (2014) - a downloadable pack which contains information about current practice, innovative approaches in befriending, relevant research data, and this Good Practice guide
- regular e-newsletters and bulletins for our members
- an Evaluation Toolkit - a 120 page one-stop shop guiding services through the evaluation process, and providing valuable resources for demonstrating your impact
- free or discounted publications
- free participation in regional networking events, providing the opportunity to meet colleagues, share information, and discuss current issues in the befriending sector
- the opportunity to achieve the only befriending-specific accredited qualification in the UK
- access to members-only content on the website, including hundreds of downloadable resources, template documents, tools for everyday practice, and relevant reports
- access to our consultancy and evaluation service, or 1:1 telephone support to discuss any practice dilemmas or issues with our trained and experienced staff
- free listing in the UK-wide Directory of Befriending Services
- the opportunity to work towards the UK's only befriending-specific Quality Award (Quality in Befriending), allowing you to review every aspect of your service and receive

objective and comprehensive feedback. Achieving the QiB award allows you to demonstrate the quality of your service to funders, potential befrienders, service users and referrers

- invitations to raise your organisational profile by contributing to national befriending-related research and have your service promoted at national forums
- the opportunity to participate in Befriending Week, an annual celebration and awareness raising initiative
- the opportunity to advertise for volunteers or promote your service via our social media feeds
- free recruitment advertising for befriending posts on our recruitment web page

Visit our website: www.befriending.co.uk or contact: info@befriending.co.uk for further details .

GIRFEC compliance for Scottish services working with children, young people or their parents/carers

GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) is a Scottish Government policy on an approach to working, which services supporting children, young people, families or parents are encouraged to comply with (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>). Some of the elements of GIRFEC passed into legislation with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. While the legislation places duties on the statutory sector, if voluntary sector services receive funding from statutory bodies, they are likely to be required to comply with these duties as part of a service level agreement.

GIRFEC impacts on the way services communicate and on the way they will become involved in working with children and young people, or their parents/carers so all Scottish services in this sector should consider whether their practice follows the GIRFEC model as it may have implications on how they are perceived by stakeholders.

The principles of GIRFEC are around coordinating and streamlining proportionate and timely support for individual children and young people, with a focus on promoting their wellbeing as defined by 8 SHANARRI indicators (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible, and included).

The purpose of this appendix is to support our Scottish befriending services working with children, young people and parents/carers by flagging up with a “g”, any points in the Good Practice in Befriending guide on which the GIRFEC guidance has an impact, so that the policy context can be taken into account in the guidance offered in this document.

Notes on GIRFEC compliance

p.17	g1	Support to keep up with GIRFEC implementation on a local level in the form of training, template paperwork and identifying those with Named Person responsibilities should be available from your Local Authority, Health Board and Third Sector Interface websites.
p.17, p.28, p.55, p.56, p.84	g2	The concept of “referrers” is something GIRFEC is hoping to phase out. A Named Person or in a multi-agency situation, a Lead Professional, should raise a “Request for Assistance” to your service, which should outline in SHANARRI terms the wellbeing concern that your service is being asked to support the child or young person around. This “Request for Assistance” should be a standard form used within your Local Authority area, so would replace the service’s referral form. If you aren’t currently accepting referrals from education, the source of the Named Person for school-aged children, you may wish to review this. Cross-referrals between third sector agencies may cease. While they are still occurring, services should ensure that they check whether the Named Person/Lead Professional has been made aware of the request for

		their service, to support this individual in coordinating the support for the individual child or young person.
p.17, p.55, p83	g3	<p>While building relationships with local third sector agencies may still be beneficial, they are less likely to be sources of Requests for Assistance and therefore Befriendees, as this should be the role of the Named Person or Lead Professional (most likely from statutory services). It will become increasingly important to ensure your service is on the radar of your Third Sector Interface as they will be represented at multi-agency meetings where support is being sought for children and young people by those with Named Person responsibilities.</p> <p>The job titles and local methods of managing this may differ, but your TSI should be able to advise on this. (Find your local TSI at http://www.vascotland.org/tsis/find-your-tsi).</p>
p.17, p24, p.28, p.56, p.59	g4	GIRFEC should change the assessment of befriendees, as core information on the wellbeing issue that a befriending service is being asked to support should come as part of the “Request for Assistance” – this should also cover many of the historic details covered by a traditional service assessment, as this fits with the GIRFEC principle of “streamlining processes” and avoids the family having to tell its entire story to each individual practitioner. Where this is working well, your service assessment may be become limited to finding out useful information for the matching process. Where it is working less well, your service will still need to ask questions relating to risk assessment, etc., but can use this as an opportunity to engage with the Named Person/Lead Professional to address the gaps for any future Requests for Assistance.
p.17, p.61	g5	As feeding back outcomes to the Child’s Plan reviews on the effect the befriending has had will need to be in the language of the SHANARRI indicators, it will be useful to keep the services own records in these terms too.
p.26, p.61	g6	GIRFEC introduces a much lower threshold for sharing of information (based on a concern for wellbeing, defined under the 8 SHANARRI indicators). Please check local guidance (Local Authority or TSI), but in general a concern about the wellbeing of a child or young person should be communicated back to the Named Person/Lead Professional. This will usually be covered by a mandate obtained from the young person or parent/carer, either at an overarching level when multi-agency support is first considered by the Named Person or at individual entry into your service. Under GIRFEC principles, the family and child/young person’s views on any concerns should always be sought and recorded, so this should rarely constitute a breach of confidentiality. However, it is important from the perspective of seeking informed consent that your policy and information materials referring to information-sharing reflect this requirement to feed back. Also, your policy should be clear on how staff are meant to proceed in a situation where there is a concern around wellbeing (at a lower threshold than Child Protection) and the child/young person/family’s views are that they do not want this particular information to be shared. Scottish Government guidance suggests that if staff feel the sharing of the information would lead to an improvement in the child or young person’s wellbeing then sharing should occur, with

		<p>recording of both the rationale for proceeding and the views of child/family. However, there may be some local variance on how this is to be interpreted in practice, which is why it would be advisable to be clear on any local protocols.</p> <p>In practice, this may be no different to how services have traditionally shared information with referrers, but care should be taken to ensure literature doesn't state only that information will be shared with "referrers", as the referring agency may end their involvement with the child or young person over the course of the befriending, while information would still be required to be shared with the Named Person or a new Lead Professional.</p> <p>Also, it is important to ensure that befrienders are transparently aware of the way information obtained from them in their role will be shared so your volunteer-facing literature should reflect this.</p> <p>Where there are concerns at a Child Protection level, then the response mechanism remains unchanged by GIRFEC.</p>
p.28, p.56, p.57	g7	Where a service accepts self or family requests to access the service, it will be important to establish who the Named Person is for the child or young person and to inform them that a request has been made. This will be part of the requirements to support the Named Person in their role – coordinating support for the individual child or young person. They may also be able to contribute valuable risk assessment information once they know your service is involved, as the information-sharing is envisaged as being two-way. Local authorities and health boards will be required to publish details of those acting in the Named Person role, should the child or family be unaware of this information.
p.32	g8	Information about a medical condition affecting a child or young person (either directly or within the family) which your service becomes aware of should be subject to the same tests on sharing as discussed in point g4 above.
p.50	g9	Support and Supervision sessions with befrienders are ideal points at which to glean their input into how the befriending relationship is affecting the child or young person's wellbeing. An example of an Outcomes Progress Plan using SHANARRI language to record a befriender's views can be downloaded from the BNs website (http://www.befriending.co.uk/befriendinglibrary_more.php?id=473).
p.61	g10	A Request for Assistance can be turned down if there is insufficient capacity in your service for a child or young person to join the waiting list. GIRFEC has no impact on this.
p.61	g11	The Named Person/Lead Professional will coordinate Child's Plan review meetings. As a partner to the Plan, your service should be involved in these and will be expected to feedback on the impact your befriending service is having on the wellbeing of the child or young person. As GIRFEC guarantees a Named Person for every child, there should never be a situation where a Service is left without a contact responsible for coordinating support for anyone it is offering befriending to.

p.61	g12	Befriender reviews not only provide valuable opportunities for Coordinator's to gather first hand data on how the service is working and on any impact on wellbeing, but also provide an opportunity to take on board the child/young person/family views on the service , which is a central principle in GIRFEC.
p.67	g13	Once information has been shared with your service through the Request for Assistance and you are happy that the child or young person and their family/carer are aware of this and have given consent, it will remain an in-house decision to decide on how much of this information your service seeks to share with the befriender before they meet the befriender.
p.71	g14	Even if the befriender is not overly concerned over information they become privy to in these areas, it would be good practice to encourage them to feed this back to the Service Coordinator, who should then assess whether this constitutes a concern for wellbeing that should be flagged up to the Named Person/Lead Professional. As the focus of GIRFEC is on prevention and early intervention, supplying this single piece of the jigsaw puzzle to the person tasked with coordinating overall support for the child or young person may lead to support being sought, even if in isolation, the information seems relatively low key (especially when compared to traditional Child Protection thresholds).
p.72	g15	As your Service will become a partner to the Child's Plan once a Request for Assistance has been accepted, it is likely that the feedback, in the language of the SHANARRI indicators on your befriending service, will be given to all partners of the Plan as part of a review meeting. All partners should have permission from the child/young person/family for information sharing, so this should not raise any concerns around confidentiality. Reciprocally, your Service is likely to hear feedback from the other partners on how their efforts have addressed identified wellbeing concerns, supporting the aim of all services taking a holistic approach.
p.73	g16	GIRFEC has no impact on this area, which remains firmly within the autonomy of your service. Should a Child's Plan review conclude that the wellbeing concern your Service was asked to assist with has not been fully addressed after a fixed-term relationship has run its course, it will remain within the remit of your Service to consider whether it can continue to offer befriending or not to the individual child or young person.
p.74	g17	This type of service is less common in the CYP sector. However, the goal of the GIRFEC approach is to return children or young people back to a situation where they are supported by universal services only. Unless a case could be made for an open-ended supportive relationship based on an ongoing need, then if the service is assessed as having addressed the wellbeing concern it was requested to assist with, it is likely that a Child's Plan review would at some point recommend that the intervention comes to an end.
p.84	g18	If your Local Authority or Health Board operates a system where they centrally request an overarching mandate from the child or young person and family/carer for information-sharing to occur between services brought in to support the individual,

		your service may only need confirmation that this step has been taken in the Request for Assistance.
p.58	g19	Unless a service is directly engaging with a child or young person through support group activity while they are on a waiting list, they would not usually become a partner to the Child's Plan until the requested befriending service had begun.

If you would be interested in discussing any aspect GIRFEC in terms of applying it your practice, please call Befriending Networks on 0131 261 8799. There are also useful resources on the Children and Young People's pages of the website:

<http://www.befriending.co.uk/youngpeople.php>.

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Befriending Networks

63–65 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh EH2 4SD

Tel: 0131 261 8799
info@befriending.co.uk
www.befriending.co.uk

Scottish Charity no: SC023610