



Ready Friends Befriending Forum 25 June 2024

Rhiannon Stocking-Williams, RVA's Ready Friends Coordinator, welcomed 8 participants, who attended the Befriending Forum from across Reading's community and statutory sectors.

[Please click here](#) for the slides.

The event was focused on **the voice of the volunteer**

1. Welcome, introductions and event outcomes
2. Presentations from volunteers and a client from Age UK Berkshire, Me2Club and Torch Hub
3. Small group workshop and feedback
4. Forthcoming training, updates, news etc
5. Networking time

Outcomes expected from the event

- Have heard from a range of volunteers in roles that help reduce loneliness and promote social connection
- Understand what works well (what what doesn't!)
- Understand what support volunteers need to undertake their role
- Update on events and training coming up

Breakout session and feedback

Participants were asked to consider the following:

- A. What do volunteers need and appreciate to support their role?
- B. What does your group/organisation do particularly well with regards to volunteers supporting people facing loneliness?
- C. What would you like to do more of but can't - what's stopping you (as a volunteer, coordinator, manager etc)?

Feedback from the discussion included:

A. What do volunteers need and appreciate to support their role?

Specific contact for each volunteer - clarity of who they are reporting to.

Regular supervision.

Group supervision if possible.

Training and access to this.

Clear understanding of the role - induction, boundaries

Support and respect

A good coordinator

Shown appreciation


Celebrate together

B. What does your group/organisation do particularly well with regards to volunteers supporting people facing loneliness?

Social prescriber refers people to organisations

Consistency of what we do

Building a trusting relationship



Onward support
Good working relationships with others - families working together.
Boundaries - realising we can't do everything.
Checking-in with volunteers
Volunteers events

C. What would you like to do more of but can't - what's stopping you (as a volunteer, coordinator, manager etc)?

Need more volunteers within communities.
Need more time.
Internal politics.
Language barriers

1.

Feedback from participants on the event

On a scale of 1-5, 7 participants reported that the event met their expectations **fully** (5) and **1 partly** (4)

What did you find most useful?

Hearing the voices of the volunteer.
Sharing ideas.
Learning what different groups do.
Meeting other volunteers.
Networking

How can we improve the event?

More people / groups attending.
Hearing more about the charities that come.
How to deal with upscaling problems.
Sharing what works / doesn't work.
Keeping speakers to time.
Smaller room, better acoustics, air con.

Possible themes for future Befriending Forums

Impact of loneliness on physical and mental health.
Specific challenges faced by people like being housebound or not speaking English.
Get ideas from befrienders.

Date of next Befriending Forum - September 24 (NB it's a Tuesday again!!), 1-3pm at Community Place, 3rd floor, Reading library. **Theme to be advised.**

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