

## Morecare Befriender Guidance

**Morecare's aim** is to help people to remain independent in their own homes and support their well-being, by offering befriending and/or providing transport for medical appointments etc.

**Befriending** is the simple act of giving your time to someone who needs support and companionship. A Befriender is someone they know is there for them without expecting any payment or favour in return.

**The Role of the Befriender** is to provide support and encouragement to someone who is probably experiencing problems and who may feel isolated and lonely. The relationship should be built on mutual respect, trust and interests – depending on the client's needs and wishes.

Befriending will mean regular visits – about once or twice a week – and activities may include helping to do shopping or undertake leisure activities, accompanying the client to appointments or perhaps just having a chat and a cup of tea. If the client is temporarily incapacitated, involving a hospital stay, for example, there may be a need for dog walking, checking the house, replenishing the larder and so on. This may involve more than one befriender.

### **A Befriender needs to be**

- ✓ Patient
- ✓ Understanding
- ✓ A Good listener/communicator
- ✓ Polite
- ✓ Reliable
- ✓ Trustworthy
- ✓ Discreet – keeps confidentiality
- ✓ Interested in people
- ✓ Non-judgmental
- ✓ Respectful of the person's home

### **Becoming a Befriender**

A co-ordinator will have met the client and undertaken a risk assessment at their home before you meet them yourself. S/he will aim to match their needs and your capacity and also look for mutual interests. At your initial meeting, you should begin to get to know each other and establish expectations on both sides, then arrange to visit again the following week. At this stage you should be feeding back on every visit, and seeking advice or clarification, if you need it. The co-ordinator will keep in touch over the next few weeks; all three of you will then review the situation. If there is still a need, befriending will continue and/or it may be that other organisations will also provide more support. You will undergo further appropriate training within six months.

### **Some dos and don'ts**

- ✓ Always ensure that someone responsible knows where you are
- ✓ Only attempt tasks which you are certain are well within your capabilities
- ✓ Always exercise reasonable care for yourself and your belongings
- ✓ If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, keep calm and walk away
- ✓ Report any potentially difficult situations to a co-ordinator
- ✓ Tell us about any changes, e.g. in health, which may affect what you do or how you do it

### **Don't**

- ✓ Place yourself, or allow yourself to be placed, in a position of vulnerability
- ✓ Agree to anything which compromises your safety or integrity
- ✓ Lift or shift any heavy objects (unless you are confident of your capacity) – Morecare does not expect volunteers to do so
- ✓ Administer any drug, tablet or medicine

### **Remember**

- ✓ A befriender complements existing treatment and support provided by professionals
- ✓ A befriender does not provide personal care
- ✓ A befriender is not a counsellor

### **However**

As a befriender, you may be in a position to notice when someone needs more help and support from other agencies – see 'What do I do if...?'.

Thank you for volunteering – do enjoy it!