

Befriending & Respite Volunteer

What is a Carer?

A Carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help. Carers often experience stress, loneliness and isolation, they can find it difficult to go out because they cannot leave the person they look after on their own.

What we do

We support unpaid Carers in East Sussex to continue in their caring role by providing free, high quality, volunteer-led services that encourage independence and reduce isolation.

Our services include

Regular Respite Breaks: Giving Carers the opportunity to have some time to them self, building a long-term befriending relationship with the person with support needs.

Respite for Healthcare: Enabling Carers to attend their own healthcare appointments by sitting with the person with support needs while they go.

Telephone Support: Providing Carers with a listening ear and the opportunity to discuss their caring role in confidence.

Computer Help at Home: Teaching Carers to use their computer in ways that will help them to have more time to themselves and reduce their isolation.

What does a Befriending & Respite volunteer do?

Do you enjoy a cup of tea and a chat? Looking at old photographs, playing board games, doing jigsaw puzzles? Going for a walk or visiting a garden centre? Do you have a few hours to spare each week?

We have over 100 respite and befriending volunteers, they enable Carers to take some time out from their caring role on a regular basis by spending time with the person they look after.

We try to make sure that we match each volunteer with someone that shares similar interests, giving the relationship the best opportunity to be beneficial and long lasting.

Skills/Qualifications needed

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for our volunteer's wellbeing. Our volunteers need to be:

- Patient and understanding
- Good at communicating and listening
- Able to treat people with respect
- Confident in a crisis
- Understanding of what it means to look after someone
- Able to attend induction and training sessions

Where does the volunteering role usually take place?

Volunteers usually spend time at the Carer's home on the same day and at the same time each week. Sometimes the role may involve taking the person with support needs out for a walk or to a day activity.

What is the induction process for volunteers?

We ask our volunteers to complete an application form, provide two references and meet us for an informal chat. We also carry out a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check as our volunteers work with people who are considered vulnerable. Following this, volunteers attend a one day induction, which helps them to:

- Understand more about the Association and the support it provides to Carers
- Understand what it means to be a Carer and the impact caring has on people's lives
- Feel confident in a variety of situations
- Gain an awareness of health and safety
- Learn how to be safe when lone working

What training are volunteers provided with?

We ask all our volunteers to attend Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and First Aid training. In addition to this they can also attend other relevant training throughout the year, for example;

- Dementia awareness
- Positive endings
- Basic listening and bereavement skills

What support do we offer our volunteers?

- We encourage our volunteers to call us or pop in to one of our offices if they need a chat, advice, or have any concerns
- We accompany new volunteers the first time they go to visit a Carer
- If volunteers are unable to drive we find them a volunteer driver or arrange a taxi

- We reimburse expenses incurred while volunteering
- We hold regular group supervision meetings throughout the year