



Heart and Soul Listeners

Frequently asked questions

1 What skills and experience do I need?

If you are a new volunteer with Heart and Soul you will be a good and experienced active listener and will have shown your suitability for this role with the evidence you have shared on your application form and in our subsequent interview with you.

If you are an established volunteer with Heart and Soul [you will have been volunteering for at least 3 consecutive months to date] you will, in the view of Chaplains John Nicholson and Jane Pope have already demonstrated your suitability to be a telephone volunteer.

2 What equipment do I need?

You will need a UK landline telephone or mobile phone *and* to guarantee that you can offer the client complete confidentiality when you call them. You need to guarantee, for example, that nothing you discuss will be overheard or shared with anyone other than your supervisor.

3 Will I receive out of pocket expenses for the calls I make?

It depends on your situation. If, for example, your Heart and Soul listening calls can be made at no additional cost to you, we would not be expected to make any payment for your time as a volunteer. But because we would not want the cost of calls to yourself to be a barrier to offering your help, you will speak to John Nicholson to explore a way of supporting or enabling your participation.

4 Do I have to be a certain age to participate?

You must be a minimum of 18 years of age. There is no upper age limit.

5 How long do I have to volunteer for?

For as long as you wish.

6 How much time do I have to give?

At least 1 hour each week. We will explain to your client that you will be calling once a week for around 30 minutes. You will then arrange with them the day and time that it is mutually convenient to talk. Our intention is to allocate 2 people to you to call.

7 What training and support will I get?

Your personal supervisor – CPFT Heart and Soul Chaplains Jane Pope or John Nicholson – will provide training, advice and guidance prior to starting your calls as a Heart and Soul listener and you will receive on-going support and advice from them. They will also convene audio/video-linked peer supervision meetings on a monthly basis.

8 What if I do not connect with the person I befriend or we have nothing in common?

Matching is not an exact art and sometimes no matter how many interests or similarities we share as human beings we do not connect. If this happens please do not be overly concerned. We ask that you try calling at least 2-3 times and then if you are still unsure just contact your supervisor who will discuss re-matching you and the person you call. We also give the same option to the people you call as we feel it's important to check on both sides that the match is working.

9 How do I introduce myself to the client?

PRESS 141 before calling to block your own number being disclosed, then call the client's number.

Please introduce yourself by your first name only followed by 'I am your Heart and Soul listener'. Remember that the person you are matched with will be expecting your call and will have been provided with basic information about you, in the same way as you will have been given necessary information about them.

10 What happens if I can't make a call? (Due to holidays, social/family commitments or sickness)

Please let your supervisor know as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made to cover your calls.

11 What do I do if there is no answer?

Please try again after a few minutes. If there is no response after three separate tries, leave a voicemail where possible on the third try only and then call your supervisor who will deal with the situation and may be able to call their next of kin or contact person.

12 What happens if the person tells me they are ill, or there is some kind of emergency whilst I am calling?

If you are made aware of any emergency then please contact your supervisor.

13 What should I do if the person I call starts to talk about something I am uncomfortable with, or I am concerned about their safety/wellbeing?

Your listening role is one that works within clear boundaries, which apply to both you as a volunteer and the person you share calls with. If you are uncomfortable with what is being said then you should indicate your discomfort to the person you support. Should you be concerned about the safety/wellbeing of the person, or you have concerns about the appropriateness of the call, then please always refer to your supervisor.

14 Am I allowed to exchange gifts with the person I am supporting?

No, within the boundaries of your volunteer role we ask that you do not accept or agree to accept any gifts. Similarly we ask the people you call to adhere to the same boundaries.

15 What happens when the support I have been giving ends?

It is very important that the ending of the service is handled properly. We will provide you with the support you may need and if you are having problems at any time, or want a break from volunteering, you can discuss this with your supervisor.

16 What happens if the person I call requires another service or more support?

If you feel that the person you call needs more support than you can give - or perhaps additional wellbeing calls - because their needs have changed or because they are dealing with major life changes - then please refer this to your supervisor.

17 What happens if I want to stop being a telephone listener?

If you need or want to stop being a telephone volunteer please inform your supervisor. Because of the nature of your volunteering we would ask that you give as much notice as possible so that we can ensure the people you support are re-matched and supported by others. We can also then provide any support you may require in ending your volunteering in the most positive and beneficial way possible.

CPFT Heart and Soul Service April 2020

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