

Telephone Befriending Guide

Voluntary Services Team



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The Importance of Telephone Befriending

Do you sometimes feel that you don't have anybody to talk to?

Would you like to hear a friendly voice on the phone twice a week?

Most service users would answer 'Yes' to both of these questions.

Some of our older and vulnerable service users are isolated, with COVID-19 only emphasizing a lack of social contact and support.

Our aim is to enable our volunteer befrienders to call their service users twice a week, to talk about anything they would like. Whether they fancy a light-hearted chat, or a chance to 'get it all off their chest'.

Call Priorities

During your calls, you should gather answers to the following priorities:

- Are they safe and well?
- Do they have enough groceries?
- Are they getting their medication from the pharmacy?
- Do they have any new health concerns?

IT IS IMPORTANT YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THEIR BASIC NEEDS. PLEASE EMAIL US AFTER YOUR CALL SHOULD YOU NEED TO REPORT A PROBLEM OR CONCERN, OR IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SIGNPOSTING TO BEST SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS.

Be aware

A service user may place an emphasis on needing non-essential items, such as:

“I haven’t been able to get any fresh prawns for weeks!!”

While being supportive and helping them when you can, please remember to be realistic.

Some callers might expect you to arrange a delivery of fine produce for them...that’s not what we are here for.



Be aware that some callers may be struggling with their mental health. Please remember:

- You cannot solve their problems
- You cannot make issues go away



But, you CAN listen and help to build their confidence, self-worth and resilience.

Protecting your caller identification

If you have concerns about shielding your own personal number when making befriender calls, please use the code: ‘141’ before dialing out from your landline.

It is important you feel comfortable and safe when contacting your service users and providing this wonderful service.

How do I introduce myself?

Here is an example of how best to introduce yourself when calling someone:

Hi, my name is John, I am a telephone befriender with the Humber NHS Trust. I'm calling to check how you are doing today?

When you're assigned a service user, your Volunteer Coordinator will contact you to pass on their details. This means that you're ready to get started.

Make sure you're familiar with the best ways to introduce yourself. This ensures that your service user knows who you are and why you are calling.

Your Volunteer Coordinator will have already spoken with your new befriender, however, there may be some who forget you are calling and need a gentle reminder.

Hello. My name is Susan, I'm a befriender from the Humber NHS Voluntary Services team. My colleague Sharon called you a few days ago and I'm ringing to check how you are doing?

Introductions are so important. Try to sound as friendly and welcoming as you can, as you won't yet know what kind of personality your new befriender has. They could be very chatty or very shy, so it's important to make them feel comfortable from the beginning.

Concerns and Safeguarding

As mentioned on page 2, there are a number of priority questions you need to ask while speaking with your service user.

Sometimes, these or any other questions you ask on the call may lead the service user to tell you something which concerns you, regarding their health, wellbeing or even their safety.

Some examples are:

- ***Financial concerns – such as mentioning they don't have enough money for groceries.***
- ***Welfare concerns – such as mentioning that they're in pain, unwell or neglecting personal hygiene.***

What to do when you have a concern

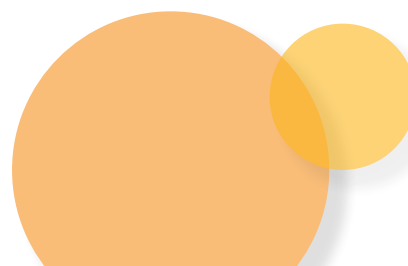
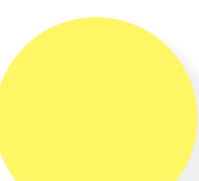
No concern is too big or too small. It is important that you let us know right away if your service user shows any cause for concern. Please contact us via one of the following to detail your concerns:

- ☎ **01482 477863**
- ☎ **01482 477862**
- 📱 **07813 543056**
- ✉ **hnf-tr.voluntaryservices@nhs.net**

If you have a serious safeguarding concern and are unable to contact Voluntary Services team, please consider getting further advice from one of the following:

East Riding Safeguarding Adults Team: 01482 396940

Hull Safeguarding Adults Team: 01482 616092



What do I talk about?

Remember, all of our service users are very different. It can take a few calls to get to know them and understand what they enjoy talking about or what makes them laugh.

Interact

It's not necessarily your responsibility to sit quietly while you listen to your befriender. While it's important to lend a listening ear and let them speak, it's supposed to be a conversation, not a monologue.

When you find yourself listening to their stories, chip in about how that might relate to your life or things you have done. Share as much as you feel comfortable to.

Some of our befrienders have told us they find it useful to take notes during their calls, such as names of family members or hobbies they enjoy – so you have some talking points for your next conversation. This will also help you build rapport with your befriender.

Be patient

Your befriender might have hundreds of stories to tell you and you might even hear some of them more than once. It's important to be patient in these moments. After all, you don't know if they have anyone else to speak to that day or how good their memory is.

Try not to rush them or finish their stories for them, one of the huge benefits of your time and generosity in making these calls is that they have a chance to relive old memories and tell stories which may bring them joy. Recalling stories in this way is also known to fight dementia and loneliness, so it really is in their best interests to talk away.

Also, you never know how much your service user has been looking forward to your call, so be the listening ear they may need during your calls.

Keep your promises

Don't get carried away and promise to call your befrienders five times a week, when you know you can only call them twice. This would get their hopes up and it would be a shame to let them down.

Be honest with them, however small the amount of time you can give them, we're sure they will be grateful for it and look forward to it. It's more important that you both know where you stand.

Try not to 'offer advice'

In these uncertain times, some of our service users will be looking for guidance to tell them what they should be doing. Be careful about offering your own advice; such as “if I were you, I would...” or “I’ve heard this person did...”

If your advice doesn't work out as they hoped, your befriender may feel that you personally have let them down or lead them down the wrong path. It's better to reinforce national guidance and stick to facts.

Don't be afraid to have a light-hearted approach

Many of our older and vulnerable people can become very concerned and worried about various things – particularly if they are experiencing a dip in their mental health. These concerns will probably present themselves as severe worry and anxiety.

Although it is important to let them voice their concerns and talk through what they are thinking and feeling, try to also find ways to lift their mood. This might be to refocus the conversation to something positive towards the end of the call, or maybe even use appropriate humour to make light in uncertain times.

It's also important to sound confident and positive when offering them options or ideas (such as getting involved in local community activities to increase their sociability). Your support and belief in them could be all it takes to convince them to try something new.



Recognising signs of depression

What is depression

There's no easy way to spot symptoms of depression as they're so varied. However, some things to look out for are:

- a lost interest in doing things they normally enjoy
- feeling down or hopeless
- have slower speech or seems more fidgety/restless than usual
- expressing feelings of tiredness and lack of energy
- overeating or have lost their appetite
- sleeping more than usual or are unable to sleep
- have trouble concentrating on everyday things, such as watching TV or reading the newspaper

Signs of depression in older people

Sometimes, symptoms of depression can differ in people of different ages. Age UK says to look out for the following in older people:

- mentions of empty fridges or cupboards
- neglected appearance or poor hygiene
- showing little signs of joy, such as no longer enjoying your calls or wanting visits from family and friends

Tips to help you support your befriender

- let them know you're there to listen and that you care about how they feel
- accept them as they are, without judgement
- gently encourage them to improve their circumstances in small ways – such as exercising, eating a balanced diet or taking up a new hobby
- ensure you have information about services available to them – if you don't know in the moment, ask your coordinator afterwards and take the details to your next call!
- stay in touch with them with your agreed phone calls and try not to let them down – you might be the one thing they look forward to that week
- be patient and listen to what they have to say
- take care of yourself and reach out for help if you need it
- if anything they say raises major concern, remember to flag this with the voluntary services team (see page 5)

Claiming back Volunteer expenses

You are entitled to claim back expenses you have incurred in completing your Volunteer Telephone Befriending role.

You will need to complete an expenses form (provided via the Voluntary Services Team), which must highlight your Befriender's number on your telephone bills and include these as evidence / receipts of your calls.

Some useful tips

- Ask for large print copies of bills - BT charge £1.50 for an itemised bill, but will give you this free of charge if you ask for a larger, visually impaired copy.
- Packages and deals - Contact your telephone provider to ask if they have any offers or 'bolt-on' deals to reduce costs. We cover the costs of these, as long as you do not incur any extra costs on your bills.

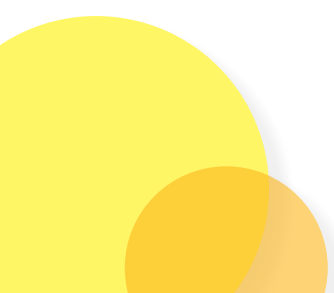
Signposting for callers

Remember.....

- ✗ you are **NOT** supporting as a counsellor
- ✗ you are **NOT** a therapist

BUT...

- ✓ you **CAN** listen
- ✓ you **CAN** encourage them to call professionals who might be able to support them better.



Useful Contacts

Emergencies

Emergency Contact Numbers				
	Helpful for	Number	Email	Website
GP	When service user shows evidence of a physical or mental health issue.	Dependant on user.		
NHS Direct		111		
Mental Health Response Service	If in urgent need of mental health care.	01482 301701	hnf-tr.mhrs@nhs.net	
MIND Emergency Support Line	If needing additional mental health support.	01482 240 133 Freephone: 0800 138 0990 Text: 07520 633 447	info@heywind.org.uk	

Mental Health Support

Mental Health Support Numbers				
	Helpful for	Number	Email	Website
Anxiety UK	Charity providing support if service user has been diagnosed with an anxiety condition.	03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 10pm; Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 8pm)		www.anxietyuk.org.uk
CALM	Campaign Against Living Miserably, for men aged 15 to 35.	0800 58 58 58 (daily, 5pm to midnight)		www.thecalmzone.net
Cruse	bereavement support	01482 565565		www.cruse.org.uk
Relate	relationship counselling	01482 329621		www.relate.org.uk
Let's Talk (Hull Residents)	Talking therapies	01482 247111		www.letstalkhull.co.uk
East Riding Emotional Wellbeing Service	Talking therapies	01482 335451		humberews.co.uk (online self-referral form iaptportal.co.uk/erew.html)
No Panic	support for sufferers of panic attacks & obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Offers a course to help overcome phobia or OCD	0844 967 4848 (daily, 10am to 10pm).		www.nopanic.org.uk

Mental Health Support Numbers				
SANEline	support for people struggling with their mental health	0300 304 7000 (4.30pm and 10.30pm)		www.sane.org.uk/home
Samaritans	providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide	116 123 (free number - confidential)		www.samaritans.org
Rethink		0333 323 3885 - A one to one telephone and email peer support 0333 323 3880	info@bipolaruk.org	www.bipolaruk.org/find-a-support-group eCommunity. = www.bipolaruk.org/ecommunity

Domestic & Sexual Abuse

Domestic & Sexual Abuse Numbers				
	Helpful for	Number	Email	Website
Rape Crisis	Hull Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Service support service for victims/survivors of domestic abuse in Hull.	01482 329990		www.hullrapecrisis.org
Hull Domestic Abuse Partnership (DAP)	support for people experiencing domestic violence and abuse in the Hull area	01482 318759		www.hulldap.co.uk
Domestic Violence Abuse Project (DVAP)	support for people experiencing domestic violence and abuse in the East Riding of Yorkshire.	01482 396368 or via their confidential helpline 01482 396330		www2.eastriding.gov.uk/living/crime-and-community-safety/domestic-violence/domestic-violence-adult-services

Helplines

	Helpful for	Number	Email	Website
Alzheimer's Society	Provides information on dementia, including factsheets and helplines.	0333 150 3456 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm & 10am to 4pm on weekends)		www.alzheimers.org.uk
National Volunteer Responders		0808 196 3646 or 0300 131 7000 (7.00am – 11.00pm, seven days a week)		

Social Services and Local Support

Social Services and Local Support				
	Helpful for	Number	Email	Website
Adult social care	Adult social care, social issues that are affecting health and wellbeing.	Hull Service Users 01482 609100 East Riding Service Users. 01482 393939		www.hull.gov.uk/resident/adult-support-services www2.eastriding.gov.uk/living/care-and-support-for-adults/social-care-services/adult-social-care-and-support
Hull Connect to Support	Online directory of local activities and groups to join in with plus local support services	01482 318759		www.hulldap.co.uk

Social Services and Local Support

	Helpful for	Number	Email	Website
Connect Well Hull	<p>wide range of support and advice, including connecting people to services that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help people get active and feel better; • make people feel more linked in with their community; • offer support with physical conditions or emotional difficulties • provide advice on issues like money or housing. 	01482 217670 (Hull Residents Only)		Connectwell hull.org.uk
YOUR Health	<p>for making positive lifestyle changes with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight anagement • Stopping Smoking • NHS Health checks Escape Pain 	0800 9177752	HNF-TR. healthtrainers@ nhs.net	www.nhs- health-trainers. co.uk

Social Services and Local Support				
Friends against scams	concerns about being victim of a scam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens Advice Helpline: 0808 233 11 33 • Action Fraud: 0300 123 2040 		www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/

Food Banks				
Hull Foodbank (The Trussell Trust)	Food banks in 4 locations across Hull	01482 224783	admin@hull.foodbank.org.uk	http://hull.foodbank.org.uk/

Financial and Employment Support				
Advice UK		0300 777 0107		www.adviceuk.org.uk
Jobcentre Plus				www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus/existing-benefit-claims
Advice Forward Partnership Hull		01482 300303		www.adviceforward.org.uk/agency/hull-advice
The Wilson Centre Hull		01482 300 300		www.hull.gov.uk/resident/communities/wilson-centre
Citizens Advice Bureau (Hull and East Riding)		03444 111 444		www.hulland-eastridingcab.org.uk
East Riding Council		01482 394633		www2.eastriding.gov.uk/living/legal-and-consumer-advice/money-advice

Substance Misuse & Addictions

Substance Misuse and Addictions				
ReNew		01482 620013 (Hull residents only)		hangegrowlive.org/content/cgl-renew-hull#tab_2
		01482 344690 (East Riding of Yorkshire residents)		www.humber.nhs.uk/services/east-riding-partnership.htm
Talk to Frank		0300 1236600 Text: 82111 Text a question and FRANK will text you back		www.talktofrank.com
Alcoholics Anonymous		0800 917 7650 (24-hour helpline)		www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

