

Castle Point Association of Voluntary services

Guidance notes for volunteers befriending clients in their homes

1. Introduction

These are additional guidance notes applicable for volunteers who visit clients in their own homes. Please read them carefully, along with the general Volunteer Induction pack. Do ask the Befriending Co-ordinator or Volunteer Manager if you have any additional questions or are unclear about any of the issues raised.

2. The Befriending Service

CAVS Befriending Service aims to reach people in Castle Point and Rochford who are feeling isolated and / or lonely and would benefit from companionship and someone to talk to on a regular basis. As a result of feeling lonely and isolated from the community clients may visit health services, such as their GP or the local A&E on a more frequent basis than if they did not have these feelings. The Befriending scheme will be taking clients for referral from all GP's surgeries and health professionals /other agencies working in Castle Point and Rochford.

3. Objectives

A volunteer will primarily provide companionship and someone to talk to with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing of the client. By providing this service we hope the clients will grow in confidence and self esteem. To combat the issue of isolation Volunteers will be able to encourage their clients to attend local groups or clubs and to help them integrate into the community. This, in turn, will hopefully lead to a reduction in the amount of time spent accessing health services.

4. Boundaries

In the initial meeting between you, the client and the Befriending Co-ordinator we will attempt to lay down how often you will visit the client, what you will do together, how you will communicate and what you will be unable to do. As the relationship matures or circumstances change, things will inevitably evolve but do keep the Co-ordinator informed of any changes and do not feel pressured to do more or be closer to the client than you feel comfortable with. It is important that both you and the client are clear about each other's boundaries. Lack of clarity is more likely to cause problems than a client having unmet needs. You are not there to meet all their needs and feeling guilty could sour the relationship for you.

5. Confidentiality

You must not disclose any information about the user that you are visiting to anyone other than designated CAVS staff or volunteers. If a client asks you to keep something in confidence between yourselves, please insist that anything they tell you which may cause you concern will have to be reported to the CAVS Befriending Co-ordinator and they have signed a form agreeing to this. In this way, you will be protected from the total responsibility and burden of any disclosure. If you are not sure about anything said to you by a client please talk to the Co-ordinator.

6. Mutual respect

Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services does not tolerate discrimination in any form with regards to race, gender, religion, age, etc. We do not expect either clients or volunteers to tolerate this. Please report any concerns to the Befriending Co-ordinator.

7. Gifts

We ask that volunteers do not personally accept any gifts or donations if offered to them by clients. A cup of tea or a small token on a special occasion may be accepted if refusal will cause offence, but the line between a gift and a payment must never be crossed. If you have any doubts, please discuss them with the Co-ordinator. Donations to CAVS are gladly accepted but need to be recorded and officially acknowledged.

8. Telephone numbers

Volunteers must **never** give out their home, work or mobile telephone numbers to clients. If they need to contact you, this should be done through the Co-ordinator or the CAVS office. You, however, will be given the client's phone number. If phoning them yourself, please ensure you dial 141 prior to the number to withhold your number. If you do give out your telephone number to your client CAVS cannot take responsibility for any unwanted calls that you may receive from them.

9. Safety

If at any time you do not feel safe or you feel uncomfortable in a client's home, you should leave immediately and contact the CAVS Befriending Co-ordinator. Never ignore your gut instincts or place yourself in danger. Always carry the page of client details with you when you visit them in case you need to refer to them in an emergency. A copy of the CAVS Lone working policy will be made available to you.

10. Client safety

If at any time you make a visit to find that your client does not answer the door please try to contact them by telephone on your mobile phone (if you have one). Failing this please telephone the CAVS office, as soon as possible, who will then try to locate the client to make sure that they are safe and well. If you have any other issues or concerns regarding your client please contact the CAVS Befriending Co-ordinator as soon as possible.

11.Tasks

Volunteers should never perform tasks that they do not feel comfortable with. Never do anything, such as electrical repairs, that require professional training and insurance cover. Never do anything that could put you at risk of physical injury. You are primarily there to provide companionship and a listening ear. The most important thing is to be able to listen, observe and articulate your client's issues to someone who can help them. If you are unsure, always ask the Befriending Co-ordinator, who can work with you to provide to you and your client with the necessary information or the help of others trained in the specific area of need. You will be given a list of organisations and agencies that may help with the needs of the client.

12.Risk assessment

All homes visited by a Befriending Volunteer will be risked assessed by a member of CAVS staff and will be re-assessed every 6 months. However, if circumstances change in the meantime we would ask you to let us know. During your visit, should you encounter any situation or equipment which seems unsafe, talk to your client about it and report it immediately to the Befriending Co-ordinator.

13.Communication

Volunteers should try to ensure that if they make an appointment to visit a client they keep it. If you are unable to make an arranged visit please contact the client to make an alternative arrangement as soon as possible and let the Befriending Co-ordinator know of any change of date or time. If a client needs to cancel a visit they will be asked to let the Co-ordinator know as soon as possible. The Co-ordinator will then contact you. You will be required to complete and return a brief monthly report on your visits to the Befriending coordinator.

14. Visits

When the CAVS Befriending scheme places a volunteer within a client's home we have a responsibility to ensure both you and the person you are visiting are safe and well. We ask that you make us aware of any concerns by calling us on 01268 636416. We now operate the scheme Monday- Sunday but ask that you make us aware of any holidays or any visits that you need to cancel.

15. Activities

If your client is showing an interest in getting out and about in the community, maybe attending a club or local group, you can ask the Befriending Co-ordinator for advice on where to go. CAVS has a wealth of information on organisations and things going on in the Castle Point and Rochford areas.

16. Training

CAVS Befrienders will all attend a Befriender training day before they start to volunteer. They will also have ongoing support and supervision and further training, where needed, throughout the voluntary role. Please speak to the Befriending Co-ordinator to discuss any further training needs as and when required.

Most importantly of all, thank you for giving your time to the scheme and we hope that you enjoy your visits!

Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services

**Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services
Befriending Scheme Contact Information**

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