



## Befriending and Linking Volunteer

Role description – Supporting vulnerable adults

### **Aims of “Befriending and Linking” volunteers**

To support service users on their recovery journey through:

- Building on self-confidence and self-esteem
- Increasing social skills by increasing community connections
- Increasing feelings of hope, belief and trust
- Encouraging service users to take the lead in their match with a volunteer
- Working with hope, belief and trust that things can get better for service users

### **What do volunteers do?**

Each volunteer – service user match is different, because everyone is unique. However, there are common aspects to each match:

- Each volunteer supports a Befriending and Linking services service user to recover a sense of who they are by encouraging them to step outside their illness and discover/ rediscover activities and interests which they enjoy
- Volunteers work with service users as a whole person, focussing on their talents, skills and assets rather than focussing on their problems and needs
- Volunteers encourage service users to set goals which you will work towards during their time with the Befriending and Linking service
- Volunteers act as ‘community bridge builder’ supporting service users to make connections to groups within the local community
- Volunteers encourage service users to step outside their comfort zones, whilst providing support and encouragement
- Volunteers work with service users towards the service withdrawing after one year

### **Commitment**

We ask volunteers for a minimum commitment of 8 to 10 months

Within all Befriending relationships, the frequency and duration of meetings is decided by service users and volunteers. Most volunteers and service users meet on a weekly basis for 1 – 3 hours. However some matches prefer to meet their volunteer fortnightly.



## **Training and Development**

All volunteers are expected to successfully complete a short induction training course before being matched with a Befriending and Linking service user. The course will give you the basic tools you'll need to volunteer. Volunteers may also access Health in Mind's extensive internal training courses for free.

We are passionate about supporting our volunteer's personal development and also offer additional roles and challenges you may wish to undertake alongside (or in place of) your one to one befriending experience.

## **Support and Supervision**

Every volunteer will be supported by a Support and Development Worker. Volunteers meet with their Support and Development Worker on a two monthly basis for around one hour. They will also have regular access to more informal support.

The purpose of supervision is:

- To help you look at what's happening within your Befriending relationship
- To help you develop good practice
- To support you in your volunteering
- To acknowledge the work you are doing
- To identify training needs you may have

Volunteers have the opportunity to meet other Befriending and Linking volunteers at peer support sessions that we call **Firesides**.

## **Feedback**

**"What I like is the focus on fun and social, like going to a comedy or a film, and then the chance to chat about things you wouldn't usually chat to a friend about. So we sometimes talk just a little about mental health, but that not being the focus of our time together. It's all working really well and I'm getting a lot out of it."**

**"Meeting with [my befriender] has opened my eyes to things to do that I didn't even know existed. He has encouraged me to do things that I want to do."**

**"My volunteer changed my life. He was the only person in my life who wasn't paid to be with me."**

***Befriending and Linking Service Users***