

Telephone Befriending Guidelines

FGN want to reduce isolation and loneliness of older housebound people and those who are self-isolating during the Covid-19 pandemic. Telephone befriending volunteers phone the person (beneficiary) to check-in and chat on a regularly weekly basis. We want to make sure your volunteering experience is as successful as possible therefore ask you to follow these guidelines on various telephone befriending issues.

Phone calls & advice surrounding privacy of numbers

The volunteer should call the person/s once a week for up to 30 minutes. We are aware that the length of each call phone conversation may vary but should be agreed by both of you.

To keep your number private always use dial '141' in front of beneficiary's number e.g. 141 020 7385 8850.

To hide a number from a landline dial 141 and then the number; from an Android device go to the 'phone', press the vertical 3 dots for a drop down menu and select 'settings', select 'supplementary services', select 'showing caller ID', click 'hide my number'; from an Apple device go to 'settings', select 'phone', select 'show my caller ID', slide the circle to the left to hide number and back to right (green) to show number.

Volunteers' and Beneficiaries' discretion is advised. Some beneficiaries might be using a service blocking private numbers calling them, please let us know, so that we can either ask the older person to lift their block on unknown callers or if volunteer agrees, they can either ring directly from their phone number without hiding it or schedule a specific day and time to call beneficiary. When required, the volunteer should block unscheduled incoming calls from any beneficiary's number.

Confidentiality

We ask our volunteers to bear in mind that information concerning the beneficiary must be treated confidentially. You should not discuss their affairs with anyone apart from ourselves. When possible, please make sure you are alone in the room when making a call to the older person. Also, please ensure

that you keep any communication (electronic or hard copies) with personal data of beneficiaries in the most secure way and only for as long as you need it to assist that person.

Dos and Don'ts

- Do recognise your own personal boundaries
- Do make sure you are comfortable and call from a quiet area
- Do remember that the main focus of the relationship is the needs and progress of the beneficiary.
- Do Keep to your scheduled assignment times if arranged.
- Don't give out your home telephone number or address
- Don't become emotionally over-involved

If you are ever in doubt about a boundary issue, speak to FGN staff about it.

Communicating effectively

Illness, isolation or personal circumstances may affect the ability and/or desire of the person you support to communicate with you. This could lead to even their basic needs not being met. In order to support someone effectively, please try to build up a good relationship with them.

Communication barriers can include:

- People speaking different languages or English with unfamiliar accents;
- Sensory impairment, such as speech or hearing difficulties;
- Distress;
- Physical or mental illness which can affect concentration or memory;
- Level of literacy or inappropriate use of vocabulary and jargon.

Top communication tips:

- Don't assume anything; always check the person you support understands what you have said;
- If you are unsure of what to say, reflect back what has been said to you;
- If in doubt check it out; lack of communication could be due to an illness or sensory impairment.
- Ask people how you can best communicate with them;
- Ask open-ended questions, which invite communication;
- Avoid closed (yes/no) questions, which shut communication down.
- Allow for silences; it may just be that people are thinking.

Advice on possible questions to ask

- Are you self-isolating?
- How are you?
- Are you eating well and staying hydrated?
- Do you have enough food, and/or do you have a plan to get more delivered if necessary?
- Would you like FGNS to help with your shopping?
- Do you have any issues about getting the medication you need?
- Would you like FGNS to help with picking up your prescription from the pharmacy?
- Keep in touch with us if you need a chat or support by calling 020 7385 8850.
- If the client is lonely and when appropriate, we can recommend listening to a chatty radio station and put some extra pictures around of people they care about.

Tips for managing your call

- Have a fully charged mobile phone.
- Make sure you have all the emergency phone numbers you need on hand, including the office number for Fulham Good Neighbours.
- When possible, please make sure you are alone in the room when making a call to the older person.

Update /Feedback

Volunteers must give regular updates of telephone calls by email with name, date and any concerns. Please send this weekly or the end of the month.

Expenses

We will reimburse you for telephone befriending calls - you will need to provide us with a copy of your telephone bill/statement - highlighting the relevant beneficiary numbers. This will be paid by bac into your bank account within five working days from the date of processing the claim. Please email info@fulhamgoodneighbours.org with your bank details attaching the statement.