



Community Companions

Befriending for over 50s

Community Companions Volunteer befriender Handbook 2017



**Caring Together
Western Bay**
Health and Social Care Programme
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Bae'r Gorllewin**
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Community Companions – Schedule for review of Policies – February 2017

All policies, procedures, guidance and information for the Community Companions project will be reviewed annually during the month of February to ensure they meet the needs of the project, its beneficiaries and volunteers.

Setting an annual review date will enable the project to ensure that volunteers and staff have up to date and relevant information.

All policies, procedures, guidance and information for the Community Companions project will also be reviewed and updated as required at any time to meet the changing needs of the project.

The AdvantAGE Befriending Project Support Worker has overall responsibility for keeping the Community Companions policies, procedures, guidance and information up to date.



Community Companions Befriending Project for over 50s

Introduction

The Community Companions befriending project is funded by the Big Lottery AdvantAGE Fund and aims to help socially isolated people over the age of 50 in Bridgend County Borough through befriending.

Led by Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) and developed in partnership with a range of statutory and voluntary organisations we provide a flexible service to older people who may be isolated and lonely.

The project provides one to one befriending and social contact and activities via our community cafes which are run by a number of partner organisations.

This document outlines the policies and procedures for the overall project.

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Community Companions Befriending Project for over 50s

Our principles and practices

In working with older people in our community our project has a key set of principles that provides the basis on which we work with individuals who use our service.

These are:

- Bridgend County Borough is a diverse and vibrant community and in the work we do we will embrace the diversity respecting the different skills, knowledge, experiences and cultural influences that individuals bring to the project;
- The right of an individual to chose their own path and to establish their own goals no matter how small or large these may be;
- To promote befriending which is non-judgemental by being aware that we all have prejudices and make assumptions about others that will affect our relationship with them;
- To take our lead from the projects beneficiaries, allowing them to make decisions on the type of befriending and support they require;
- We will promote an approach that listens to and supports the beneficiary but that aims to enable them to become more independent and active;
- To embrace a positive outlook to the work we do and to those in our community, recognizing that everyone is unique and has something of value to offer.



Community Companions Befriending Project for over 50s

Aims and outcomes

The overarching aim of this project is to improve the well-being and quality of life of older people in the community by reducing social isolation.

Outcome 1 – By the end of the project, 800 isolated people aged 50 plus will report decreased anxiety and increased motivation to develop and maintain social networks.

Outcome 2 – By the end of the project, 1,000 beneficiaries will report an increase in self confidence and improved engagement within the local community.

Outcome 3 – Following the end of the project, the evaluation will create a greater evidence base demonstrating the importance of befriending for isolated people aged fifty plus in all aspects of physical health, emotional wellbeing and community cohesion.



Community Companions Befriending Project for over 50s

Access to the project for older people

Referral procedure

The project is offering befriending and access to community cafes to people over the age of 50. The criteria are as follows:

People feel isolated or lonely;

- Aged over 50;
- Live in Bridgend County Borough;
- Live in sheltered accommodation, Housing Association property, rented property or your own home;
- Suffered a bereavement and need support to get back into community life;
- Need extra support with practical things like going for a walk or shopping;
- Want to take part in community activities or clubs but don't have the confidence to go alone.

Who can refer people?

Anybody that is supporting an older person and feels they need that little extra support or companionship. These can be health professionals such as occupational therapists, GPs, social workers and district nurses. Housing associations can also refer as well as voluntary organisations, or family and friends. People can also self refer.

The logo for BAVO (Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations) features the word "BAVO" in large, bold, blue letters with a green-to-blue gradient. The letters are set against a white background with a green and blue wavy border above them.

Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations



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1. The person making the referral should telephone or email the Project Manager to informally discuss the referral in order to ensure the referral would be appropriate.
2. If the referral is appropriate, the Project Manager will send out a referral form, project guidance/information leaflets.
3. The referrer then discusses the project with the person concerned, giving out relevant information leaflets.
4. The person making the referral then fills in the referral form **only after they have obtained consent from the person being referred**. This is extremely important, without consent befriending will not work.
5. The referral form is sent back to the Project Manager and the referral is placed on the matching list.
6. The Project Manager arranges an initial meeting with the person referred, to discuss the project and establish what their needs are and what they want from befriending.
7. The Project Manager will begin the matching process and match a volunteer to the beneficiary.
8. The Project Manager/Project Support Worker will contact the referral and let them know that a volunteer befriender has been matched with them. They will then arrange an initial visit with the befriender to establish that the match up is appropriate.
9. The Project Support Worker will accompany the befriender on the next two visits to establish that the match up is suitable to continue.



10. Throughout the referral process the Project Manager/Project Support Worker will keep the referrer informed.

It is important for referral agencies to understand:

- They must discuss our service with the person they are referring;
- The person being referred must be happy to receive support from us;
- That the person referred must meet our criteria;
- The role of the befriender and the limitations of this role;
- Befrienders are there to compliment existing services;
- That befrienders are not there to provide any medical, personal or domestic support;
- The need for the continued involvement of the referral agency.



Community Companions Befriending Project for over 50s

General befriending information

Want to volunteer as a Befriender?

Many befriending services rely on people of all ages and backgrounds to volunteer as befrienders.

The Community Companions project will provide relevant training and support to enable you to volunteer effectively.

Who makes a good volunteer befriender?

Volunteer befrienders are of all ages and with a wide variety of life experiences and backgrounds.

People may come from any walk of life – some are students, employed or unemployed, retired etc. Sometimes, those who have worked with a befriender and have experienced the benefits for themselves decide that they would like to become a befriender too.

It is important that projects have a broad mix of befrienders as service users will also come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences and will enable the best possible match to be made between befrienders/befriendees.

What does a befriender do?

- A befriender will start to build a relationship with their befriendees by:
- Taking time to get to know each other;

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- Listening to and discussing anything that is worrying them;
- Valuing their opinions and beliefs;
- Accompanying them to appointments or social activities, for example to a Community Café;
- Assisting with day to day activities that will allow them to live independently;
- A befriender will work towards achieving positive change in an older person's life;
- A befriender will tend to focus on supporting their befriender in coping with life challenges through listening skills and empathy;
- A befriender is not there to provide personal care or to do things for someone. A befriender is there to enable and support.

Although a mentor or befriender may do all of the above, they are not a substitute social worker, counsellor or home help.

Volunteer befrienders do, however, work very effectively alongside professionals as part of an integrated package of support for individuals.

The benefits of volunteering as a befriender

The potential benefits of being a volunteer befriender are wide-reaching and show that befriending is a very effective form of support. The benefits depend on the aims established for each befriending service but typically include some of the following:

- Develop new skills e.g. First Aid, listening skills, communication, health and safety training etc;
- Improve your job prospects and employability;
- Build your confidence;
- Gain insight into issues facing people in the community;
- Feel a sense of achievement from helping someone to improve their quality of life;



- Participate in a new experience;
- Experience a deed that is richly rewarding as you make a difference to people's lives.

How do I volunteer?

If you are interested in volunteering with the Community Companions project you can contact the AdvantAGE Befriending Project Manager Stephen Thomas on 01656 810400 to find your perfect opportunity. You will be guided through the volunteer recruitment procedures which include a volunteer application form, interview and take up of references.

Volunteer befriender role

Responsible to: Community Companions project / the service provider

Duties and responsibilities

- To engage with Befriendees and provide a supportive relationship that will improve their confidence and independence;
- To assist a befriender with participating in community life and accessing community activities, e.g. attending a community café;
- To visit the befriender on times agreed and assist with their required support;
- To maintain your position of trust and build one to one relationships and adhere to the appropriate boundaries within the Community Companions project i.e. policies and procedures and safety requirements;
- To respect befriender's wishes and help them to become more independent;
- To work within a non-discriminatory boundary;



- To support staff with information sharing and updates.

Skills, experience and knowledge

You should be:

- Genuine, honest and non-judgemental;
- Empathetic, with good listening skills;
- A good communicator who doesn't impose their own views, values or opinions;
- Approachable with a positive attitude;
- Able to form a positive supportive relationship with others;
- Self-aware and have an awareness of how situations may affect you and the befriender;
- Willing to attend training as required.

Training and development

- If you want to volunteer as a befriender you must take part in First Aid training and Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA). We will provide you with all the training you require for the role at no cost to you. You will be required to attend additional training that will enhance your skills and experience and meet our requirements and needs.
- You will receive on-going support and guidance by your designated supervisor who will support, advise and guide you throughout your volunteering role.

Other information

- We request that volunteers are willing to commit their time for a minimum of three months. You can decide how many hours that you are able to give each week/ month; however by committing to a

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period of three months, we can ensure consistency for our befrienders.

- As this post requires direct contact with vulnerable adults, an enhanced CRB check will be carried out by the Community Companions project.

Befriending boundaries

The Community Companions project expects you to bring commitment to your volunteering role, but there are limits to this commitment. It is important that you set your boundaries when volunteering.

You may in time become a friend to the person that you are befriending and increase the number of visits, or keep a clear boundary and just visit at arranged times – either is ok. You can make your own choices about the depth of support you would like to offer and as long as you inform the coordinator how often and when you'll be visiting.

However, be careful – don't let your commitment reach a level that you can't keep up or from which you wouldn't be able to pull back. Be aware of the demands of your own life, especially the needs of your own family home life. Only offer as much time as you can give regularly and always remember that you are volunteering on behalf of the Community Companions project and that you are accountable to the Community Companions project for what you do.

It is important that you are open and honest about where your boundaries lie and what you can and can't do for them. This will also be emphasised by the co-ordinator during an initial visit to the person.

You should not be involving your own family. If you want to or have reason to, once you've got to know the person you are befriending, please discuss



this with your supervisor. It is important that you keep some time and space for yourself.

Remember, if you think you are reaching the limits of your commitment; talk things over with your support worker. We value the time that you can give and will support you in your volunteering role as much as possible.

Top Tips for volunteering

- Think about whether this is the right time for you to volunteer, weigh up your other commitments and think what the maximum time you can commit to is;
- It is fine to commit to one session per week/ fortnight/ month if this is all you can manage, it is important to be reliable for whatever commitment you have made;
- You can review how much you're doing as your lifestyle changes; each volunteer makes an agreement for about three months, which is reviewed;
- Remember not to worry about the work, we're sure you will get a lot out of the experience and your time will be valued by us;
- Volunteers are expected to have a monthly meeting with a Community Companions project provider organisation or the Community Companions Project Support Worker to ensure that you are well supported and are happy in your role and that the project's standards are met. This meeting will be informal and provides an opportunity to discuss your volunteering work, the ways forward and your own personal development. These



meetings will be arranged at a time and place which suits you and any expenses will be reimbursed;

- Think about what kind of befriending you would like to do, you don't have to choose just one element, you may have a particular interest; you can also review this after each agreement.



Community Companions project volunteer's travel and subsistence allowance

The standard rate for volunteer travel is currently 25p per mile. This should be used for journeys made during the course of your volunteering time for the Community Companions project only.

If travel involves train, bus or taxi journeys, volunteers must include receipts / tickets with the expenses claim form.

Each claim will only cover the cost of the volunteers' expenses and not those of the beneficiaries.

Claim forms must be given to your supervisor / support worker by the end of each month to be checked and approved. The expenses will be paid by cheque to volunteers on a monthly basis. Please ensure you include your address on the expenses form as the cheque will be sent through the post.

Any potential claims for subsistence allowance should be agreed in advance with the Project Support Worker.

If a volunteer is using their own car as part of the volunteering scheme to escort beneficiaries, then the vehicle must be insured for business use and copies of the insurance certificate, MOT and driving license must be given to the Advantage Befriending Project Manager in advance.



Community Companions volunteering policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for volunteer involvement in Community Companions project. It is of relevance to all within the project, including volunteers and BAVO staff attached to the project.

This policy will be reviewed in February each year to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the Community Companions Project and its volunteers.

Commitment

Community Companions recognises the right that people have to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering. It also acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. Community Companions values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Community Companions recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.



Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Community Companions and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.



Volunteer co-ordination

All volunteers have a nominated member of staff to provide guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. The nominated member of staff is Tracy Evans (AdvantAGE Befriending Support Worker)

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation is Heidi Bennett (Chief executive officer). This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers.

Recruitment and selection

Community Companions is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion and political beliefs. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the organisation or referred to the BAVO volunteer Centre.

All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure (CRB check) now known as a Disclosure and Barring check (DSB). They will also be invited to attend an informal interview.



New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training and development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organisation in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated staff referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the management of volunteers will be provided for those staff with direct responsibility for same.

Support, supervision and recognition

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above (Tracy Evans).



Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff, at staff meetings etc.

The recruitment of volunteers' procedure

The first stage of any recruitment process involves planning. Community Companions has a volunteer role description which highlights the main role and responsibilities of a volunteer befriender.

The role description will give clear guidance about skills and experience that an individual would need to become a volunteer befriender and draw up a person specification. The volunteer recruitment process must be developed in such a way that they treat every applicant in a fair and consistent manner.

Advertising

In order to attract new volunteers Community Companions will work very closely with the volunteer bureau in BAVO.

We will also advertise in various places across Bridgend County Borough, for example, shops, doctor's surgeries, hospitals libraries, local schools etc. We will also aim to recruit volunteers through the media via regular press releases in local newspapers and radio stations. We will also work closely with partner agencies that may identify volunteers too.

Every advertisement should reflect the Community Companions vulnerable adults Policy and it should clearly outline the skills and experience required duties to be undertaken and the necessary training and CRB checks that are required. However, it should not discriminate in terms of age, race, gender or disability.



Application form

All applicants must complete the Community Companions volunteer registration form. The Support Worker will look at the application forms to ensure that a fair and equitable scrutiny is completed and will contact the applicant to arrange a meeting.

Upon completing the registration form, the volunteer must meet with BAVO to complete their online CRB check where they must bring three forms of ID with them (please refer to latest guidelines).

Every volunteer must provide two character references before being placed as a befriender.

Meeting / interview

The Community Companions Support Worker/Project Manager will meet with all applicants prior to any recruitment decisions being made. The meeting will enable them to explore further the information provided in the application form. The questions to be asked should provide the applicant with the opportunity to recount previous experiences and give examples of how they have or would handle situations and why they would like to volunteer as a befriender.

Whilst it is important to elicit information regarding an applicant's technical capabilities it is also necessary to explore his or her attitudes and commitment to older people's welfare.

During the initial meeting, Community Companions staff will:

- Explain more about Community Companions;
- Clearly outline the training that they must complete;



- Discuss the CRB check;
- Give the applicant an opportunity to talk about themselves;
- Offer more information if required.

References

At least two references should be requested from individuals who are not related to the applicant. These will be character references offering us an insight into their competencies and attitudes.

If the references raise any concerns the Project Support Worker must be contacted for guidance.

Disclosure Barring Service

Disclosure and Baring Services (DBS) checks are another tool in the recruitment procedure. A DBS check tells Community Companions about a person's recorded offenses. It can indicate that a person is not a suitable person to work with Elderly people, for example, if they have a history of sexual offending.

Volunteers should be assured Community Companions will take into account the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and only consider offenses which are relevant to the care and supervision of older people.

Community Companions is not allowed to disclose any information about any volunteer's offenses so applicants can be assured of confidentiality. The project Manager will however tell the volunteer whether or not they are considered suitable to work with elderly people.

Applications for DBS checks will be dealt with by the Project Support Worker. We cannot accept an existing DBS check that a volunteer may



have as DBS s are currently non-transferable and a new application must be submitted for each volunteering role.

Recruitment decisions

Once Community Companions have received all of the relevant information about a volunteer, we will make an informed decision as to whether or not to accept the individual as a volunteer.

Post recruitment

It is important that once a new volunteer has been recruited we will provide the following support:

- Provide a rolling programme of relevant training to fully support and prepare the volunteer for their role;
- New volunteers are made aware and sign up to Community Companions policy and procedures, best practice guidelines and any codes of conduct;
- Regular supervision is provided and any training needs are established and actioned;
- A six weekly review of the befriending relationship to ensure that both parties are happy and working well together.



Community Companions Befriending Project for over 50s

Volunteer role description

Role and task description of a volunteer befriender:

The role of the befriender

Volunteers with the Community Companions Project play a key role in supporting the older people who use our service. Volunteers are in a position of trust as they establish a one to one relationship with the person they befriend.

The volunteer will provide a supportive relationship that enables the older person to build their confidence.

The task of a befriender

The tasks undertaken by a befriender will vary depending upon the needs of the individual they are supporting but will at all times be governed by the policies and procedures operated by the service.

The following list provides the range of tasks and the approach to be adopted by a volunteer whilst working with the service:

- To develop and promote a positive relationship with the older person with whom the volunteer is matched;
- To establish and maintain appropriate boundaries in the befriending relationship;

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- To agree with the older person the types of activities they wish to undertake, ensuring that these comply with the services safety requirements;
- To be consistent and dependable;
- To recognise that the relationship with the older person may be challenging due to the individuals needs and circumstances and being realistic about what can be achieved in your relationship with them;
- To agree to abide by the confidentiality policy and other policies and procedures of the service;
- To work in conjunction with the staff of the Community Companions project to provide a quality service, by participating in support and supervision sessions with the Project Manager/Project Support Worker, referring concerns about the older person they are befriending where appropriate and completing monitoring forms;
- To offer an accepting and understanding presence and work within a non-discriminatory framework.

Experience, skills and attitudes required

The project wants to promote an inclusive service that recognizes the wide range of skills and experiences that volunteers can bring to the project and their befriending role to help reduce loneliness and isolation amongst older people.

The volunteer person specification outlines the range of skills, experience and attitudes that we feel would be relevant to the role.



Essential requirements

All volunteers will be over the age of 16 prior to being matched with an older person who has been referred to the project, and are required to successfully complete a training programme and a selection interview. In addition, as the role involves working with vulnerable adults, volunteers will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Volunteer befriender person specification

Volunteers will come from all walks of life, with a range of experiences and skills to offer. There are no specific educational qualifications required and we aim to recruit people with potential as well as those with relevant experience or qualifications. We are looking for people who will embrace the principles and values that we promote when working with older people and see something of themselves in the following descriptions.

Personal qualities

- Able to communicate well with other people, particularly older people and be a good listener;
- Can relate to the issues and challenges facing older people;
- Reliable, consistent and dependable

Personal values

- An ability to accept people for who they are;
- A respect for others as being of equal worth



Organisational issues

- Able to understand and work within the Community Companions boundaries and policies;
- Able to work within the Community Companions confidentiality policy;
- Able to actively take part in support and supervision sessions;
- Ability to provide information and keep accurate notes of the befriending sessions they have with older people.



Community Companions equal opportunity and diversity policy

Introduction

Community Companions aims to ensure that all activities both within and connected to the project are undertaken with the need of equal treatment and opportunities for all volunteers at the forefront of all decisions.

We also believe that diversity will make our project more effective in meeting the needs of volunteers, users and partners. This policy applies to every volunteer, beneficiary or person connected with the Community Companions project, and the services that we provide.

The Equal opportunities and diversity policy underpins all other policies and procedures. All organisational policies, remuneration opportunities, hours of work, supervision, disciplinary or other procedures and benefits are designed to promote equal opportunities and protection of volunteers.

Community Companions will ensure that all activities are free from covert and overt discriminatory practices with regard to age, colour, creed, ethnicity, gender, nationality, mental status, race or sexual orientation and disability due to regard to the particular requirements of individuals, including those who may require support to undertake their role or learning.

The Equality Act (October 2010) states that:-

‘The headings of **age, disability** (which includes mental health and people diagnosed as clinically obese), **race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender orientation, gender reassignment** (people who are



having or who have had a sex change, transvestites and transgender people), **marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity** are known as '**protected characteristics**'.

There are seven different types of discrimination:

1. **Direct Discrimination:** discrimination because of a protected characteristic.
2. **Associative discrimination:** direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person with a protected characteristic. (This includes carers of disabled people and elderly relatives, who can claim they were treated unfairly because of duties they had to carry out at home relating to their care work. It also covers discrimination against someone because, for example, their partner is from another country).
3. **Indirect discrimination:** when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a protected characteristic.
4. **Harassment:** behaviour deemed offensive by the recipient. Volunteers, beneficiaries or employees can claim they find something offensive even when it's not directed at them.
5. **Harassment by a third party:** Employers are potentially liable for harassment of staff or customers or volunteers by people they don't directly employ, such as a contractor.
6. **Victimisation:** Discrimination against someone because they made or supported a complaint under Equality Act Legislation.



7. **Discrimination by perception:** Direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic (even if they do not).

Implementing the policy:

All Volunteers will be informed of the requirements of this policy and disciplinary measures will be enforced if there is evidence of any breach of the policy.

Equality and diversity in volunteering.

Community Companions is committed to providing equal opportunities in volunteering and demonstrating that we value the diversity of our work force. In order to ensure that equality underpins all aspects of our volunteering procedures and practices, we will:

- Do our best to ensure that we do not discriminate against any volunteer or potential volunteer. We will only consider factors relevant to somebody's ability to perform the required role. We will aim to meet any reasonable and appropriate additional needs they may have to enable them to volunteer;
- Aim to recruit a team of volunteers which is as diverse as the community we serve;
- Do everything necessary to provide an environment which is free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination and will act promptly on complaints of this sort.
- Provide a safe working environment which is accessible to all volunteers, users and partners.



Responsibility for implementation of this policy.

The Community Companions Project Support Worker will be responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy on behalf of the Community Companions project. However, all members of staff, volunteers and beneficiaries have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and work within the guidance.

All volunteers will be informed of any changes in legislation regarding Equal Opportunities. An appeals procedure is in place should a volunteer or service user feel they have been unfairly treated.



Community Companions – monitoring diversity

Community Companions is committed to ensuring and evidencing that the diversity of our volunteers matches the diversity of the population in Bridgend County Borough. In order to ensure that diversity underpins all aspects of our volunteering procedures and practices, we will:

- Carry out survey of our volunteers annually (April each year) which will ask them about their age, gender and ethnicity;
- This data will be reviewed annually by the Welsh Institute of Health and Social Care (WIHSC) who will provide us with a detailed report each June;
- We will compare the information in this report to ONS census data on the diversity of the population in Bridgend County Borough to ensure our volunteer recruitment matches the diversity of the local population.



Community Companions

Safeguarding Adults

Policy and procedures

February 2016



Based on All Wales Policy and Procedures for the protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse.

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1 Introduction

This policy is based on a summary version of the *All Wales Policy and Procedures for the Protection of vulnerable Adults from Abuse* which is intended to guide the safeguarding work of all those concerned with the welfare of vulnerable adults employed in the voluntary sector.

2 Values

The values and rights below underpin the way vulnerable adults should be supported and cared for in whatever settings or places they live in or use:

- **Independence:** to think, act and make decisions, even when this involves a level of risk;
- **Dignity:** recognition that everyone is unique, with intrinsic value as a person;
- **Respect:** for a person's needs wishes, preferences, language, race religion and culture;
- **Equality:** the right of people to be treated no less favourably than others because of their age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, class, culture, language, race, ethnic origin or other relevant distinctions;
- **Privacy:** the right of the individual to be left alone or undisturbed and free from intrusion or public attention in their affairs;



- **Choice:** the right to make choices, and to have the alternatives and information that enable choices to be made.

Putting principles and values into place.

Adult protection is everyone's concern.

- All staff, and volunteers should understand the nature of abuse, how people might be at risk of harm and work to prevent it.
- When responding to referrals, the concern raised **must** be believed/ accepted without judgement;
- Staff and volunteers have a duty to report any concerns they have about the potential abuse of a vulnerable adult;
- Careful consideration and respect of vulnerable adults' wishes and preferences are essential to the adult protection process;
- Vulnerable adults with the capacity to understand abuse and risk of abuse have the right to refuse intervention even if this leaves them at risk of significant harm (e.g. somebody who may experience domestic violence but doesn't want to report their loved one/ partner), but those working in adult protection, may need to act to protect other vulnerable adults (e.g. an elderly mother who is living with them) from the same abuser;
- Vulnerable adults are entitled to the protection of the law and full access to all parts of the criminal justice system, in the same way as any other citizen;

- Vulnerable adults who are allegedly victims of abuse should have the highest priority for protection, assessment and support;
- Vulnerable adults have the right to full and timely information about their rights, services, what is being done on their behalf and why. This can be summarised as; nothing about us without us;
- Carers have the right to have their needs taken into account;
- Alleged perpetrators, including those who are carers, must have their rights taken into consideration;
- Alleged perpetrators who are also vulnerable adults have the right to be supported and to have an independent advocate if they wish;
- Staff, volunteers and managers in the Community Companions project must work actively and proactively with each other, with other agencies, and with the vulnerable adult and their family or carers, to ensure protection and prevention;
- Community Companions makes a commitment to work actively to ensure the Wales Adult Protection Policy and Procedures are integral to working practices and staff and volunteers' training.

3 Definitions

(a) Vulnerable Adult

The Welsh Government's guidance 'In Safe Hands 2000' specifies that:
"A vulnerable adult is a person over 18 years of age who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation."

This also includes people who have a physical, mental or learning disability or who may lack the capacity to make specific decisions about their own wellbeing and treatment.

(b) Abuse

Abuse is defined as: *"A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons which results in significant harm"* ('In Safe Hands 2000').

Abuse may be:

- A single or repeated act,
- Multiple forms of abuse;
- An act of neglect;
- A lack of appropriate action;
- An act of omission (failing to act) or neglect;
- The unintended consequences of a person's actions.

Abuse can occur in any relationship and fundamentally in an abuse of trust, including failure to meet a duty of care.

4 Categories of abuse

There are many ways in which a vulnerable person may be abused. It is not unusual for an abused adult to suffer more than one kind of abuse. Accordingly, the impact of abuse and its seriousness for the individual must be evaluated in every case.

There are five main categories of abuse:

- Physical e.g. hitting, unreasonable physical restraint, hair pulling;
- Sexual e.g. rape, actual or threatened sexual assault, inappropriate use of explicit sexual language which causes offence;
- Financial e.g. theft, misuse of money including state benefits, blocking access to assets;
- Emotional or psychological verbal assault e.g. shouting, screaming, humiliation;
- Neglect/ acts of omission e.g. failure to assist in personal hygiene or the provision of food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect from health and safety hazards, restricting or preventing social contact with friends or relatives.

(a) Other forms of abuse

More information with typical examples of each kind of neglect and indicators to look for can be found in the All Wales summary document and Annex C.

Other possible forms of abuse include:

- Self-neglect;
- Institutional abuse;
- Discrimination and hate crime;
- Abuse by a stranger;



- Domestic abuse.

When determining the categories of abuse that apply, the impact on the victim is the primary consideration, not whether or not the abuse is intentional, reckless or willful.

5 Action by Community Companions staff and volunteers.

(a) Alert

An **alert** refers to a concern, disclosure or suspicion that a vulnerable adult is being abused.

Consideration must be given to the perceived level of risk to the vulnerable adult and others and appropriate emergency action taken if necessary.

A **concern** may be a suspicion or allegation of abuse. A concern may be what a person saw, heard or was told. The referrer does not need evidence of abuse. The expectation of this policy of anyone suspecting abuse is if **in doubt report**.

A **disclosure** is information about possible abuse received from a vulnerable adult or someone else on their behalf.

If the vulnerable adult does not want the alert disclosed

If the vulnerable adult does not want a member of staff or a volunteer to disclose, nevertheless staff and volunteers have an overriding duty to report to their manager but must also tell the vulnerable adult that they are doing so.

Role of the person raising the alert

Where alerts are referred:

Alerts should be referred to Social Services or to the Police if a crime is suspected.



Action on alert:

Staff and volunteers must not delay reporting an alert. If their Line Manager is not available they must contact another manager or trustee in the Community Companions project or contact Social Services or the Police themselves if the situation calls for it.

Immediate action:

Abuse may present itself as an acute situation demanding immediate action. A vulnerable adult may be in immediate physical danger or need urgent medical attention, or be suicidal. In this case, contact the police directly using a 999 call.

Procedures: what to do if someone discloses to you or you discover abuse

- You must ensure the care and safety of the alleged victim;
- Do not promise to keep the information secret;
- Listen carefully to the account without interrogating the vulnerable adult – only clarify the facts;
- Note persons, places, and times referred to in the account given;
- Write down as soon as possible exactly what the person said then sign and date it;
- Preserve any physical evidence;
- If the perpetrator is also a vulnerable adult equal consideration will need to be given to their needs;
- Contact your manager who will inform the appropriate authority. If s/he is not available then contact Social Services Duty Desk

It is essential to be sensitive as in cases of possible sexual abuse or situations where there is a danger of exposing the person to further immediate risk of abuse or injury.

What to do when an incident does not appear to require emergency procedure or there is insubstantial evidence of abuse or neglect:

- Employees and volunteers should be sensitive to cultural, racial and other factors affecting families;
- Employees or volunteers observing any indicators of abuse should initially and sensitively seek an explanation. If the families are uncooperative the Volunteer should advise them that the manager will be informed;
- The manager should check out the volunteer's report tactfully with the individuals concerned. They should explain to the carer that any unsatisfactory explanation of the vulnerable adult's condition may be discussed with other professionals;
- Employees or volunteers uneasy about any explanation or noticing re-occurrence should share their concern with their manager. Unstable or changed situations should also be reported. Concerns should be recorded;
- If a vulnerable adult begins to disclose information about abuse, employees or volunteers should listen carefully without prompting or probing but having first explained the limitations imposed by the law and the Community Companions confidentiality policy. The exact words should be recorded as soon as possible. **It is not the role of employees or volunteers to investigate allegations or diagnose abuse;**
- Written records should be simple and factual. They should be written in ink within 24 hours, dated, signed and held confidentially and securely. Actions taken by employees or volunteers should also be recorded;



- If the manager finds cause for concern, s/he will contact the appropriate officer at Social Services or the Police.

(a) The adult protection referral

A referral is the direct reporting of an allegation, concern or disclosure to a statutory organisation (Social Services, Police or health). It is a concern that is formally recorded on an adult protection referral form – this is the start of the formal adult protection process.

A referral should be made as soon as possible and in any case within one working day of the alert.

The referral must highlight the perceived level; of risk to the vulnerable adult and others. The form should be completed as you are able with all details you are aware of included. Do not delay sending the referral form if you are unsure of anything e.g. age of person or details of GP.



6 Responsibilities

(a) Designated lead officers:

The Project Support Worker is responsible for safeguarding vulnerable adults. However the listed contacts for Community Companions partners can also be contacted for information and advice on issues regarding Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

Annex A: Safeguarding contacts for Community Companions

The following information provides volunteers with the various contacts they will need for the Community Companions project.

E.g. you may be a volunteer befriender for the Community Companions project and be managed / supported by Scope Cymru. You may need to contact your volunteer manager to raise a concern about a person you are befriending. If you cannot contact your volunteer manager you can always contact the Community Companions Project Support Worker, Tracy Evans, (details below).

Age Connects Morgannwg
Helen Davies
Service Co-coordinator
T: 01443 490666
E: helen.davies@acmorgannwg.org.uk

Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO)
Tracy Evans
Project Support Worker
T: 01656 810400
E: tracy.evans@bavo.org.uk



Bridgend Carers Centre,
Helen Pitt, Manager, Bridgend Carers Centre
87 Park Street, Bridgend, CF31 4AZ
T: 01656 658479
E: manager@bridgendcarers.co.uk

Crossroads Bridgend County
Jane Questle, Scheme Manager
T: 01656 784100
E: bridgend.county@crossroads.org.uk

Mental Health Matters Wales
Richard Jones Manager
T: 01656 738750
E: richard.jones@mhmwales.org.uk

Scope Cymru
George Keane / Donna Akdemir-Young
T: 01656 741166
E: george.keane@scope.org.uk
E: donna.akdemiryong@scope.org.uk

Community Companions confidentiality policy

- Complete confidentiality will be maintained throughout the project. All beneficiaries will be made aware that any information they give to a befriender or project staff maybe shared within the project on a strictly 'need to know' basis;
- Volunteers will not pass any information about a beneficiary to any individual or agency outside of the project, without the client's informed consent and the consent of their Volunteer Manager and the Community Companions Project Support Worker. **The only exception to this is when there is a POVA issue. If there is a POVA issue please follow the POVA policy and procedure;**
- Reasonable care must be taken to ensure that conversations relating to beneficiaries cannot be overheard by visitors, other beneficiaries and anyone outside of the project;
- Personal information relating to individuals within the project, including staff, clients and volunteers, will be stored securely;
- Individuals will be made aware of what personal information is being held on them and will know how to access their own records;
- Personal information relating to clients and volunteers may only be processed with the express consent of the individual concerned;
- Volunteer supervision records will be kept and are confidential to the individual concerned and their Volunteer Manager/ Support Worker;



- Volunteers' home addresses and contact details, e.g. emails etc. will not be disclosed to beneficiaries under any circumstances;
- Any written records about beneficiaries or volunteers are the property of the project and should not be made available to any other agency without the Support Workers prior consent;
- Confidentiality may only be breached in the following circumstances:
 - Where there is a risk of serious harm to any individual;
 - Where a beneficiary is judged to be at risk of sexual, emotional or physical abuse;
 - When not acting on information would increase the risk of danger to an individual.

Procedure for breaching confidentiality

If there is risk to an individual which requires you to breach confidentiality you should take the following action:

- Inform the individual of the need to breach confidentiality prior to it happening. In an emergency, where this is not possible, s/he will be informed of the breach at the earliest opportunity. Confidentiality must only be breached following discussion with your Volunteer Manager and/or the Project Support Worker;
- Please refer to your 'Who to contact' handout for your Volunteer Managers and the Project Managers contact details;
- Volunteer managers based with Community Companions partner organisations must inform the Community Companions Project Support Worker of any breach of confidentiality at the earliest opportunity;



- Unauthorized breaches of confidentiality are unacceptable and will be subject to disciplinary action.



Community Companions

Lone worker policy

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- 2 Definitions**
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- 5 Policy aims**
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1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there are adequate systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of lone workers and volunteers in order to reduce the risks of lone working as far as is reasonably possible and practicable.

2 Definitions

Lone worker:

A lone worker is anyone who works in isolation from their colleagues without close or direct supervision.

Examples include:

- Community development workers who are out in the community;
- Community Companions staff and volunteers visiting people on a one to one basis;
- Volunteers out in the community i.e. befriending.

People in fixed establishments:

- People who work from home;
- People working separately from others, e.g. in offices (outreach work), some research and training establishments, Community centres;
- People working outside normal hours, e.g. Co-ordinators;
- Development Workers, volunteers, cleaners and security staff;
- Maintenance or repair staff.



Mobile workers working away from their fixed base:

- Workers or volunteers involved in home visits, community activities/ events, drivers;
- Outreach workers i.e. based at satellite offices in the community;
- Development Officers, coordinators or similar professionals visiting domestic and commercial premises as well as meetings.

3 Scope

Own employees:

This policy applies to all employees of BAVO who are part of the Community Companions project and includes any agency, or visiting professionals employed to provide services on their behalf.

Volunteers:

This policy applies to all Volunteers of the Community Companions project and includes any agency, or visiting professionals employed to provide services on their behalf.

Contractors:

This policy also applies to participating Independent contractors and their employed staff.

14 Legal requirements

Applicable laws:

Community Companions has an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees and Volunteers. The management of health and safety at work regulations places a duty on employers, to identify significant risks within the



organisation and implement suitable risk treatments, to reduce those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Places of work:

Where workers are on premises where someone other than their employer has control, their safety is the responsibility of the main occupier of those premises provided that the occupier is also an employer or conducting an undertaking there.

Where an employer does not exercise control over the premises it is more difficult to ensure a safe and healthy environment. Employers are required (including self-employed i.e. independent contractors) to provide comprehensible information on health and safety for others who are working on or visiting their premises.

Personal responsibility:

Employees and volunteers are required to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts at work.

This policy and supporting training should ensure that such persons do not take short cuts or employ dangerous practices but that they are instructed to consider and identify potential hazards and to implement a form of risk assessment to ensure the safety of themselves and any other persons they may be working with.

Working outside normal hours:

Where a person is required or requests to work after normal working hours and alone, it is necessary to identify the degree of risk in assessing whether or not this is a safe practice. Employers must make a “suitable and sufficient” assessment of any risks to the health and safety of their



employees and Volunteers. Any such risks identified are likely to be greater for lone workers. These findings must be recorded on the risk assessment documents.

5 Policy aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff and volunteers who work alone are not exposed to risks to their health and safety and to outline the steps to reduce and improve personal safety to staff and volunteers who work alone.

The policy also aims through it's rollout to raise awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.

6 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to ensure:

- (a) Lone workers are identified;
- (b) That risks inherent in lone worker situations are assessed and suitable precautionary measures taken;
- (c) There is a local safe system of work which:
 - records the whereabouts of lone workers;
 - tracks the movement of lone workers;
 - follows an agreed system for locating staff who deviate;
 - from their expected movement pattern;
 - identifies when lone working is no longer appropriate.



Risk assessment:

Risk assessment is the overall process of performing a systematic written risk analysis and risk evaluation in order to identify methods to control the severity of the risk.

Risks to be assessed during the process include:

- Violence and aggression;
- Isolated areas;
- Sudden illness;
- Building condition;
- Substances hazardous to health;
- Animals;
- Vehicle breakdowns;
- Weather hazards.

This list is not exhaustive and other risks may be identified during the assessment process.

Safe system of work:

This is a method of working which addresses risks that cannot be controlled in any other way. Safe systems of work are dynamic systems, which mean they should be constantly monitored to identify weakness and improve methods of controlling the risk. Localised protocols such as a “buddy system” for safe working should be considered and encouraged.

Systems of work should be designed to reduce the need for lone working where possible. If this is not possible, safe work practices should be implemented, in line with the findings of a general risk assessment, to avoid



or minimise the possibility of abuse. Personal alarms, mobile phones and physical barriers should only be used in conjunction with safe practice.

7 Organisational responsibilities

Responsibilities for the health and safety of lone workers are allocated as follows:

Senior Management

Chief Executive Officer:

- a) Ensure the management of lone working within the organisation is adhered to under the Health and Safety Policy;
- b) Maintain a log of the locations of employees considered to be lone workers;
- c) Maintain contact with staff who work alone, both internally and externally;
- d) Implement systems to identify those staff who do not report or return at the expected time;
- e) Ensure systems are in place to take action to contact / locate staff who have failed to make contact or return at the expected time;
- f) Raise the appropriate level of alert / alarm if staff cannot be contacted / located within **two hour period** after the expected time of contact or return;
- g) If staff cannot be located, then contacting the police;
- h) Monitoring feedback from the organisation on lone worker risk and seeking to improve processes;
- i) Monitor and update this policy as appropriate.

Project Support Worker/Coordinator:

- a) To identify all staff likely to work regularly in isolation from their colleagues;
- b) To assess the risks that such lone working presents;
- c) Having assessed the risks, to decide whether lone working is reasonable or not in these situations;
- d) To report to the Line Manager any situation where the risks cannot be controlled;
- e) If lone working is considered reasonable, then the Manager must ensure that suitable precautions are in place, such as:
 - Mobile telephones;
 - Team working;
 - Giving information on known risks;
 - Reporting in procedures;
 - Personal alarms;
 - Recording identified risks on the local risk register.
- f) To ensure all staff and Volunteers that work alone are made aware of this policy;
- g) To support staff who are victims of violence and aggression in line with the organisational policy.

Employees and volunteers:

- a) Identify any activity carried out by them which will involve them working alone;
- b) Comply with any precautionary measures including guidelines laid down by managers such as a 'buddy system';



- c) Provide any of the following information that may be needed to set up a safe system of work:
- Working alone at the beginning and end of the normal working hours;
 - Daily out of base work place i.e. diary sheets;
 - Detail of the make, model, colour and registration number of the vehicle being used;
 - Notifying any changes to the daily out of base work plan on the diary sheet (i.e. ad-hoc or 'spur of the moment' visits);
 - Informing key person ("buddy") on return to base
- d) Report to their managers any unsafe or potentially unsafe situations, and to report incidents in which violence or aggression or threats using the incident reporting procedure;
- e) Take reasonable care for their own safety and not expose them to unnecessary risk';
- f) To attend any training provided.



Community Companions boundaries policy

This policy sets out the boundaries to the role of Community Companions Volunteers who are linked with older people.

The need for a boundaries policy

Boundaries are limits we set ourselves in everyday relationships, for example, what we share of ourselves. They can be set consciously or unconsciously. They are a fundamental part of befriending and help volunteers know where they stand on various issues such as working limits, conduct and confidentiality. They also avoid confusion which could cloud the development of a relationship.

A boundaries policy aims to ensure that the expectations and roles of all concerned are made clear from the outset.

Scope of the policy

Because of the emphasis Community Companions places on trying to create a normal friendship between a beneficiary and volunteer, there are fewer boundaries than in some other befriending projects.

There are also some specific grey areas in which there is not a hard and fast rule, and what is acceptable, is to some extent, a matter for discussion between the support worker/coordinator, the beneficiary and the volunteer. As well as dealing with general guidelines, this policy tries to deal thoroughly with these areas of flexibility.

No matter how detailed this policy is, issues that are not covered will inevitably arise. In these cases, as in all other cases of uncertainty, the golden rule is always to consult the support worker/Coordinator before going ahead.



General boundaries of a volunteer's role.

As a general statement, volunteers should not be required to do anything which they have not been prepared for, or committed to, and in which Community Companions is unequipped to support them.

The commitment made by a volunteer.

In taking on their general role, volunteers will have made a commitment to abide by the service's guidelines, and most importantly, those in the volunteer agreement.

They will also have committed to giving a certain amount of time to their volunteering, doing certain activities in certain places. However, it may be that the volunteer has other commitments and that from the beginning it is made clear that the timing, location or activities need to remain constant.

It is very important that all involved are informed of, and appreciate, the limits to the volunteer's commitment and that the volunteer does not feel unfairly pressured to increase their commitment. If there is pressure for aspects of the befriending to be changed, there are regular opportunities for this to be expressed through formal and informal feedback to the project coordinator and these can then be brought up at a volunteer's regular supervision.

The commitment asked of a volunteer does not usually extend beyond meeting up and doing the activities agreed at the time agreed.

Personal relationship between a beneficiary and volunteer.

A strong friendship often grows between the people involved in befriending, and a volunteer may become involved to some extent in the beneficiaries' personal life, and vice-versa. As long as the relationship is kept within certain limits, this is a very positive development and is encouraged.



As described in the section on volunteer's commitments, such a relationship is not regarded as an essential element that must be committed by a volunteer: if it occurs, it will do so in the natural course of events.

Confidentiality

Community Companions has a Confidentiality Policy which deals with this issue in depth. The firm rule is that volunteers (and beneficiaries) should not disclose any personal information learned in the course of their befriending.

The only exception to this rule is if a volunteer learns something which causes them concern about the beneficiaries' welfare. This could be anything from teasing to financial impropriety or physical abuse. Any such matter comes under Community Companions Protection of Vulnerable Adults policy which gives guidance on the steps to be taken.

These will always include consultation with your support worker/coordinator and may involve other organisations concerned with the beneficiaries' welfare, and in extreme cases the police.

Contact outside befriending activities

Unless encouraged or suggested by the volunteer, the general rule is those beneficiaries should not make contact with a volunteer outside of these occasions. A volunteer should not divulge personal contact details without first discussing with their support worker/coordinator.

Personal conduct

Everybody involved in Community Companions should be treated with respect and politeness at all times.



Physical shows of affection

Physical shows of affection towards a beneficiary by a volunteer or staff member, such as hugging, are not appropriate. If a beneficiary makes a show of affection this should not be abruptly rejected in a manner which might cause offence but it should not be reciprocated or encouraged.

Volunteer expenses

Volunteers should never be out of pocket in connection with their volunteering and are reimbursed all their expenses (including petrol) by Community Companions.

Where more expensive activities than those initially agreed are contemplated, the support worker/coordinator must be consulted to ensure that the budgets can cover the cost.

Volunteers and beneficiaries should never lend or borrow money from each other.

What volunteers are not....

The boundaries for Community Companions befrienders can be looked in terms of the roles they explicitly **do not** take on.

This could be taken negatively, but does provide clear reference points and also clarifies their relationship with other organisations that Community Companions works with.

A volunteer should be given sufficient training for the role, and be responsible for setting and monitoring boundaries between the befriending relationship and making this explicit to the beneficiary.



Not a carer:

Volunteers are not expected to take on the formal care duties expected of family or professional carers such as administering medication, moving and handling, assisting eating and going to the toilet. Their role is that of a friend offering companionship.

Medication:

The only case in which any involvement with medication has been considered is when it is habitually self-administered orally by a beneficiary.

Moving and handling

Moving and handling awareness training is run by Community Companions to make volunteers aware of the dangers involved for both themselves and a service user in moving and handling should they require it.

There are some grey areas relating to moving and handling:

If a beneficiary uses a wheelchair but is able to get themselves in and out of a car unassisted, it may be acceptable for a volunteer to lift the wheelchair into the back of the car.

The risk assessment should identify if this is likely to occur, and the volunteer should be provided with training by Community Companions.

It must be ensured that the volunteer is physically capable of performing the task without a likelihood of injury to them.

If a beneficiary uses a wheelchair, a volunteer may push the wheelchair during the visit. The risk assessment should identify if this is likely to occur, and the volunteer should be provided with training by Community Companions. It must be ensured that the volunteer is physically capable of performing the task without a likelihood of injury to them.



Medical emergencies

As outlined in the sections above, in any medical emergency, volunteers should not hesitate to contact the emergency services, usually to request an ambulance with paramedic.

First Aid training

Community Companions aims to make First Aid training available to volunteers as part of their induction training.

This reinforces the guidelines above concerning action to be taken in an emergency, but is provided as something thought useful as a general life skill to be encouraged: Community Companions' volunteers are not always qualified First Aiders and it should not be assumed that they are.

Boundaries to roles of others involved in the service

Most of this policy concentrates principally on the role of volunteers. The boundaries to be observed by others (and the roles they need to perform) are touched on above and are looked at more fully here.

1 Beneficiaries

- Beneficiaries should treat volunteers with respect;
- They also have a duty to contact the support worker/co-ordinator/Project Manager (who will inform the volunteer) if they cannot keep an appointment, or if they wish to end the befriending;
- If they want the befriending to change substantially, they should not pressure the volunteer, but should make the suggestion through the support worker/coordinator/project manager;
- They should not contact the volunteer outside the occasions or times agreed with the volunteer;
- They must maintain confidentiality regarding the volunteer at all times.

2 Carers

In many cases beneficiaries will also receive help from family members, Social workers or carers. In addition:

- The Carer must tell the support worker/coordinator/project manager during the referral process and at the risk assessment about any medical or behavioral issues on the part of the service user which might possibly affect the volunteer's role;
- The carer should not ask the volunteer to take on inappropriate roles, such as that of a Carer or Advocate;
- Any suggestion that the volunteer should take on minor care roles must be referred to the Support worker/Co-coordinator;
- In any discussion about Person Centered Planning, they should advise the volunteer to consult with their Support worker/Coordinator on the issue;
- They should ensure the rules of no overnight stays are observed;
- They must maintain confidentiality regarding the volunteer.

3 Support Worker/Co-ordinator

- The above must endeavor to find out all relevant information about any medical or behavioral issues on the part of the service user which might possibly affect the volunteer's role;
- Must be aware of the medical/ health problems of the beneficiary and can sign post them to alternative projects if they are not suitable to Community Companions;
- Must provide adequate support and advice to volunteers regarding their role and any boundaries issues that arise;
- Must provide or obtain access to any training needed by the volunteer in the performance of their role.



Community Companions settling differences policy and complaints procedure

Volunteers are energetic, interesting, good-natured people. The idea of conflict and bullying doesn't fit well. Surprisingly, it is actually a big issue and can be a part of any organisation when a variety of people are brought together who are all passionate and wanting to contribute.

Whether it is volunteer/staff relations that are causing tension or volunteers amongst themselves who are disagreeing, it is important that problems are brought to light early and resolved using the correct process and procedures.

Common reasons for conflict include:

- Dismissing new ideas;
- Tension between new and old members;
- Heavy workloads;
- Introducing change;
- A poor relationship between staff and volunteers;
- Volunteers not feeling respected.

Volunteer rights

Volunteers have the right to express grievances, dissatisfaction and concerns with the volunteer program or organisation and to have their grievances heard, respected and dealt with in a professional, efficient and fair manner.

It is therefore important to ensure volunteers are aware of the settling differences policy and complaints procedure



What is the settling differences policy?

A settling differences policy is a written document that outlines the process of making a complaint, how it is resolved and who is responsible for resolving it.

Complaints procedure

If you have a complaint about any aspect of your role as a volunteer or the project you should contact the Community Companions Support Worker/Coordinator at BAVO on 01656 810400.

The Support Worker/Coordinator will arrange to meet with you to talk about the issue and try to solve the issue internally.

If the issue is with the Support Worker/Coordinator or you do not feel comfortable approaching them about the issue you should contact the Chief Executive at BAVO on 01656 810400.

If a solution isn't found after the first meeting between the complainant and Support Worker/Coordinator and neither party is satisfied with the outcome, the next step would be for the Chief Executive to be involved in discussions.

It is best for disputes and grievances to be solved internally. However, if after approaching all levels of management, the dispute cannot be resolved, a third party can be brought into discussions. This third party could be the local volunteer resource bureau.

It is important for all discussions to be friendly and open and for the volunteer to be encouraged to be direct.



The meeting will take place where it is convenient for both parties and the volunteer feels comfortable – somewhere his or her privacy isn't jeopardised.

Complaints procedure

A complaint can be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction whether justified or not'.

The complaint could be made in person, by telephone, by mail or email. Whatever method, it is important to remember that, whether or not the complaint seems unjustified or unfair to the person who receives it, the person complaining will not see his or her complaint as either unjustified or unfair.

It is therefore very important that all complaints are treated with respect, listened to attentively and dealt with professionally. Complaints are a useful feedback in helping to improve customer service and maintain the reputation of both BAVO and Community Companions as a caring organisation/project which seeks to serve the local community.

Complaints procedure – stage one

- Thank the person for bringing the matter to our attention;
- Get all the facts. If the complainant is present, listen carefully, don't interrupt, and give the person time to calm down, if necessary. Try to put yourself in his/her position. If the complaint is received by mail or email, acknowledge it at once with thanks;
- Try to deal with the complaint immediately and correct the mistake. Get the complainant's agreement to the solution. Make detailed notes and send a copy to your Project Co-ordinator.



Complaints procedure – stage two

- If it is not possible to resolve the complaint immediately, then advise the complainant that you need to investigate the matter more thoroughly and that you will refer to the Project Manager immediately.
- Ask the complainant to complete the complaint form.
- Gather as much information and /or consult other people. Make detailed notes of your findings and conversations and submit the complaint form and your notes to the Project Manager as a matter of urgency.
- Learn from the experience to prevent the same thing happening in future.

Community Companions policy on gifts

Volunteers are not allowed to receive gifts or money of any kind which could in any way be interpreted as bribes or an attempt to bring influence or pressure to bear.

Under no circumstances can volunteers receive payments for their service from beneficiaries as a means of thanks.

However, small gifts for example, biscuits or chocolates at Christmas or special occasions could be acceptable.

Each volunteer should declare such gifts, however small, to their Project Support Worker/Co-ordinator.

If in any doubt whatsoever on this issue, the matter must be discussed with the Project Support Worker/coordinator before acceptance of the item.



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