



**East Sussex**  
Fire & Rescue Service

# Befriending Project Role Description

## **PURPOSE OF ROLE:**

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Community Volunteer Scheme started a befriending service in March 2020 due to its success we are now expanding the scheme to accept more cases. Working with Community Safety to befriend individuals that are isolated the project is to support adults over the age of 18 who have been identified as requiring a befriending call. It is about keeping in contact with people and providing them with a friendly befriending call with the aim of reducing their social isolation the scheme will cover any area in East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove.

Befriending provides companionship for isolated people, the chance to develop a new relationship, and opportunities to participate in social activities. Community care policies have led to unprecedented numbers of potentially vulnerable people living independently across the UK. One commonly reported problem for these people is a sense of isolation. This isolation may be related to practical difficulties such as a lack of transport, fear of crime, or language and cultural barriers. People who have lived in institutions may never have had the opportunity to develop local social connections or the skills for maintaining relationships, while for some older people bereavement may contribute to social isolation. Befriending is one way to address the isolation felt by people in all of these groups.

## **KEY ACTIVITIES:**

Volunteers will support individuals by telephone befriending to provide contact with a volunteer to reduce social isolation.

- Weekly / fortnightly calls by telephone to the individual to their home or mobile telephone as agreed. Support can include help to access and engage with community resources that promote resilience (for example social or specialist support groups)
- Support can also include home safety advice, fire safety, fuel poverty matters and referrals can be sent to the organisations that are relevant.
- Other general community safety activities, especially in conjunction with partner agencies such as Sussex Police, local councils and health agencies, which help ensure the individual has the support they need.
- Volunteers may come into contact with confidential or sensitive information as part of their role, but they are asked to remain aware of the need to keep organisational and personnel information confidential. This will be covered in your initial training period and you will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Statement.

## EXPERIENCE/SKILLS/QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THE ROLE:

- Good interpersonal skills and confidence when talking to individuals on a one-to-one basis
- Ability to arrange own calls and to follow instructions
- Ability to use technology (tablet and mobile phone) to find out information on local services
- Commitment and reliability
- Someone who is interested in other people
- Someone that is a good listener
- Someone who is reliable
- Someone who can commit to 7 hours per month volunteering.

## TRAINING:

Befrienders will be trained to provide support and companionship to lonely, or emotionally distressed people, the results of befriending can be very significant. Befriending often provides people with a new direction in life, opens up a range of activities and leads to increased self-esteem and self-confidence. Befriending can also reduce the burden on other services which people may use inappropriately as they seek social contact.

Only telephone befriending is currently offered, and all volunteers will undertake any necessary checks at the appropriate level for their duties.

Training will be provided by the Community Volunteer Coordinator and outside Agencies.

ESFRS Safeguarding Team will provide safeguarding awareness sessions to the volunteers focusing upon indicators of abuse and neglect and how to raise a safeguarding concern.

Volunteers will have access to a service email account and mobile phone so that they can make and receive befriending calls. Volunteers also have access to directories of resources including East Sussex Community Information Service (ESCIS) and One Space.

Volunteers will be issued with an identity badge and if also attending other volunteer activities and events a full Community Volunteer uniform will be supplied.

Volunteers will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS) check.

## LOCATION:

The scheme will run across East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove.

## RESPONSIBLE TO:

ESFRS Volunteer Coordinators  
Eastbourne Fire Station  
Community Safety Dept.  
Whitley Road  
Eastbourne BN22 8LA  
01323 462438

[volunteer@esfrs.org](mailto:volunteer@esfrs.org)

[www.esfrs.org/communityvolunteers](http://www.esfrs.org/communityvolunteers)



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