

# Volunteer Visitor Training

Key Points- April 2019



## Key Points

### Your Role

Your role is about:

- Being positive
- Asking questions
- Listening
- Building rapport
- Getting to know the older person as an individual
- Encouraging choice
- Making regular contact
- Reducing loneliness
- Keeping within boundaries
- Maintaining confidentiality (but knowing when to share a potential safeguarding risk)

Befriending is “a relationship between two individuals which is initiated, supported, and monitored by an agency. Ideally the relationship is non-judgemental, mutual, purposeful, and there is a commitment over time.”

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Remember what your role is about and the reasons we keep [clear boundaries](#) in place.

**You:**

- Give your time to listen to the older person
- Build a friendship relationship that helps them feel less lonely and more connected
- Help empowering the older person

It's **not part** of our remit to:

- offer support or advice / provide personal care/ assist with house hold matters
- Whilst your intention is very likely good the impact could be negative
- Accept or give personal gifts
- Share personal details of the people you support, unless needed for an emergency
- We promote independence, avoiding the older person becoming reliant on the volunteer
- We carry out risk assessments for all our volunteering roles to protect you and the older person

If you're in any doubt, talk to your local IA contact.

### Boundaries

## Key Points

### Lone Working

#### Personal Safety Guidelines

1. Tell your Trusted Contact where you are going.
2. PLAN – Prepare, Look Confident, Avoid Risk and Never Assume
3. Familiarise yourself with the area
4. Be mindful of the personal information you share
5. Be aware of cultural context
6. Keep your mobile charged and nearby
7. Carry your ID badge with you
8. Record and report any incidents that cause you concern

#### Practical things to have in mind

- Plan your journey. You might think of doing a dry run before your first visit.
- Tell your Trusted Contact where you are going/ what time to be expected back.
- Remember to charge your phone and save key contact numbers
- Some people find useful to make some quick notes on what you'd talked to refresh your memory before the next visit
- Have some questions/ topics of conversation in mind
- First visits might be quite short as you get used to each other- that's ok!
- Look out for safeguarding signs

### Practicalities

## Key Points

### Communication

#### Questioning

Use different types of questions to make the most of the conversation:

- **Open** – Who, What, Why, When, Where & How – to generate conversation
- **Closed** – requiring a yes / no answer – to clarify points & bring conversations to an end.
- **Probing** – build on earlier questions – useful for gaining depth in the conversation

#### Ways to build rapport

- **Give your full attention** – avoid getting distracted, ask relevant open questions, actively listen to the responses
- **Show non verbal connection** – nod, demonstrate positive body language – eye contact, leaning in, matching their body language.
- **Generate positive feeling** – pay a genuine compliment, share something meaningful about yourself (without over disclosing), use positive language / words , remember key things about them and ask at later visits or come back to them in the conversation, empathise rather than sympathise.

#### Positive Language

- Using more **positive** words can have a direct impact on the **actions** we choose to take by helping develop the brain's frontal lobes and increasing cognitive action.
- It can be very easy to slip into the **habit** of commenting on negative topics or phrasing sentences in a negative way (even if your intention isn't to be so!)
- Obviously we want to be **authentic** when we speak to the person we are matched with but it's important too that we maximise our impact as much as we can in the time we have with them.
- Challenge yourself to **replace phrases** such as:

Why not?, no problem, can't complain, weather's horrid today

**With...** sounds like a plan, absolutely, things are good thanks or weather's been better

### Positive Language

## Key Points: Active Listening

Verbal & visual signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agreeing</b>, making <b>positive</b> affirming noises.</li> <li>• <b>Nodding</b> and maintaining <b>eye contact</b></li> <li>• <b>Leaning in / forward</b></li> </ul>	"Yes" "I agree" "I'm with you" "I hear you"
Reflecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Repeat</b> back what the older person says <b>using their words</b>.</li> <li>• You would do this throughout a conversation. Don't repeat every word - instead pick key words or sentences.</li> </ul>	"I really enjoyed attending my local U3A group for the first time." "I'm really glad you enjoyed it"
Paraphrasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recap the main points of what you are hearing in <b>your own words</b>. You would do this throughout a conversation. Useful to check understanding.</li> </ul>	"I've got so much to do to the garden, I'm not sure I'm going to get it sorted out by the time the cold weather comes" "I see, you're worried that with winter on its way you might not get it all sorted out"
Summarising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short <b>recap</b> of the most important parts of a fairly long conversation. Shows that you've been paying attention to what they're saying. Can also help prevent them repeating old material and move conversation forward.</li> </ul>	"So you've found a good new drama on the BBC then! Let me get this right, you're saying the plot is that ...."
Reflecting Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mirroring</b> back to the speaker in short statements the <b>emotions</b> that they are displaying.</li> </ul>	"I've got my daughter visiting this weekend" 'Sounds like you're looking forward to that'

## Key Points

Dementia Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dementia is an <b>illness</b> caused by <b>damage</b> to a person's brain</li> <li>• <b>Changes to the brain</b> lead to memory loss and problems with thinking. Their behaviour may also change</li> <li>• Dementia causes <b>memory difficulties</b>. A person may forget names or where they have put things</li> <li>• It can affect how people <b>feel &amp; behave</b>. They may be sad or angry or confused.</li> <li>• A person with dementia can find it hard to do <b>everyday activities</b> like cooking, shopping or getting dressed.</li> <li>• If you notice the older person you visit showing <b>unexplained changes</b> in their behaviour please talk this through with your Independent Age contact.</li> </ul> <p>For more information, check our new factsheet.</p> <p>Source: <a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.uk">www.alzheimers.org.uk</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In many ways, mental health is just like physical health: everybody has it and we need to <b>take care</b> of it.</li> <li>• Good mental health means being <b>generally</b> able to think, feel and react in the ways that you need and want to live your life.</li> <li>• If someone goes through a period of poor mental health they might find the ways they're <b>frequently thinking, feeling or reacting</b> become difficult, or even impossible, to cope with. This can feel just as bad as a physical illness, or even worse.</li> <li>• Mental health problems range from common problems, such as <b>depression and anxiety</b>, to rarer problems.</li> <li>• If you think the person you're visiting is having difficulties please <b>do not attempt</b> to resolve them yourself but <b>talk</b> to your Independent Age contact.</li> </ul> <p>Source: <a href="http://www.mind.org.uk">www.mind.org.uk</a></p>	Mental Health
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## Key Points

### Safeguarding

**Safeguarding** is about protecting an adult's **right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect**. There are different types of abuse: Physical Sexual, Psychological/ Emotional, Financial/material, Domestic violence, Modern Slavery, Discriminatory, Organisational, Neglect/Acts of Omission and Self-harm.

If something is disclosed to you that you feel represents potential abuse or a risk:

- Stay calm and listen carefully, being empathetic and sensitive
- Let the person know:
  - They did the right thing to tell you – abuse is never acceptable and they don't have to put up with it, You are treating the information seriously
  - You will have to share the information within the organisation, even if they don't want you to tell anyone. This doesn't necessarily mean that any further action will be taken, but as a volunteer for Independent Age, you have a responsibility to share your concerns with your IA contact.
- Share the info with your IA contact immediately during working hours Monday to Friday, or the **Out of Hours** number on 0207 605 4455, **opening hours:** 8am until 9am in the morning and then from 5pm to 9pm. On the weekends from 8am to 9pm and during periods such as Christmas.
  - All incidents should be recorded in writing, dated and signed within 24 hours. You should:
    - Be accurate and descriptive: don't make assumptions
    - Be clear and concise
    - Record times, dates, people & exact words used
    - Distinguish between fact and opinion
    - Share relevant details which may indicate urgency
- Follow Data Protection guidelines and destroy all notes once you have shared the info with your IA contact.

## Key Points

### Expenses & Diary Sheets

#### Diary Sheets

- Your 'Diary Sheets' provide **evidence** of the impact of volunteering to the older people we support and the time you invest helping to reduce loneliness.
- **Instructions** on how to fill them in are in [your Welcome Pack](#). If you have any questions around this please let your IA contact know.
- An **electronic** version is preferred as it helps us record the data efficiently and quickly by **uploading directly** onto our database. We use this to collate and understand the activity you're delivering and help us shape future services.
- Attending **training** or get togethers should also be recorded on the diary sheet.
- Please **email** the completed form monthly or quarterly (depending on your frequency of visits) to your IA contact.

#### Expenses

- We don't expect you to be out of pocket when volunteering with us and you'll be **reimbursed** for reasonable, receipted, expenses.
- Send **completed** expenses forms, receipts and accompanying Diary Sheet to your IA contact
- **Donating your expenses** – talk to your IA contact if you'd like to increase your support in this way.

#### Data Protection

- We are **legally obliged** to protect any personal data we hold on volunteers, employees, older people and other people supporting Independent Age.
- You may see **personal data** such as names and contact details or even information about people's health, circumstances, families, or other private matters.

#### Please:

- In your home, keep printed information in a **lockable** drawer or cabinet
- Ensure any personal and sensitive information isn't **taken out of your home** unless you need it for your visit
- Keep data you **store** on the older person to a **minimum**
- Don't **store or copy** any info on to another medium e.g. computer or a USB key
- Don't **discuss** personal or sensitive information and ensure any conversations aren't overheard
- Store the older person's contact details in a way that the **minimum amount** of detail is stored. No identifiable sensitive information should be stored on your phone and it should be locked with a secure code at all times.
- **Inform your Independent Age contact** immediately if information is lost or shared inadvertently.

### Data Protection

## Key Points

### Support & next steps

- **Independent Age contact:** contact them with any feedback or concerns you may have about your role; they'll also carry out regular reviews with you
- **Volunteering Team:** if you have any questions that you don't feel you can ask your Independent Age contact or to talk about other roles and for guidance/ procedures on 020 7605 4255 [volunteering@independentage.org](mailto:volunteering@independentage.org)
- **Advice Line:** for advice on older people's issues/ ordering guides. 0800 319 6789 (Mon - Fri 8am-8pm, and Sat, 9am-1pm) [advice@independentage.org](mailto:advice@independentage.org) Advice guides, information & videos are also available at: [www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)
- **Safeguarding concerns** - during working hours Mon - Fri , please speak to your contact. **Safeguarding out of hours** 8am until 9am in the morning and then from 5pm to 9pm. On the weekends 8am to 9pm, Tel. 020 7605 4455
- **Policy & Campaigns:** [policy@independentage.org](mailto:policy@independentage.org)
- **Fundraising enquiries:** 020 7605 4223 [supporters@independentage.org](mailto:supporters@independentage.org)

- Visit the **Volunteer Section** of our website at [www.independentage.org/documents-for-volunteers](http://www.independentage.org/documents-for-volunteers)
- Let your Independent Age contact know how your **first visit** went
- Submit your completed **expenses** form with receipts alongside your **diary sheet** when they are due
- Keep an eye out in your emails for our next **Volunteer Newsletter** with information you need to know
- Attend one of our **Volunteer Get Togethers** held around the country for a chance to meet other fellow volunteers and your local team and learn from each other's experiences
- Follow us on **Facebook & Twitter**