



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

<p>What is a 'Telephone Befriending Volunteer'?</p>	<p>A Telephone 'Befriender' is someone who calls a specific named person at a regular time, normally weekly, to have a friendly conversation.</p> <p>The purpose is to help reduce isolation and loneliness in the person receiving the call. For some people this telephone call may be the only conversation they'll have that week so as a volunteer you are providing a really valuable service.</p>
<p>What skills do I need to be a Telephone Befriender?</p>	<p>You don't need any specialist skills to do this but you do need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the time (we usually ask volunteers to commit to calling around once a week) • Have patience and be friendly • Have common sense • Be comfortable using the telephone • Be good at chatting but more importantly, be a good listener • Have a positive outlook and a good sense of humour • Be able to call from your own telephone.
<p>Can anyone be a Staying Well Telephone Befriender?</p>	<p>At present we ask that our volunteers must be over 18 but there's no upper age limit.</p>
<p>How long will I be on the phone for?</p>	<p>Ideally between 15 minutes and no more than an hour. If you find calls are shorter or longer than this, speak to the Staying Well team – it may be your person needs a different kind of support.</p>
<p>When should I call?</p>	<p>Calls should be made on any day of the week from 9am to 8pm – and be at a time best for you both. However, if it's better for you both to call outside of these hours, please let the Staying Well team know.</p>
<p>Who will I be calling?</p>	<p>You will be calling someone who has requested telephone support from Staying Well. The person will know that you are going to call so the call shouldn't be unexpected.</p> <p>Some Staying Well clients may have some additional needs like hearing or memory issues. Your Staying Well contact will talk to you about anything you need to be aware of.</p>



<p>Is there anything I shouldn't talk about?</p>	<p>Telephone Befrienders aren't calling to offer counselling, and definitely not to give medical or financial advice. It's also not acceptable to use the calls to influence people's religious, political or ideological beliefs (even if you have strong feelings about the benefit of such subjects).</p>
<p>Where should I make the call from?</p>	<p>Where possible a quiet space in your own home is best where you won't be disturbed by others and can give the person your full attention. The content of the calls are between you and the person you are contacting so don't share the information or personal details with anyone else.</p>
<p>Should I give out my phone number?</p>	<p>Your privacy is important to us – we will not share your number and would prefer you didn't either. If you did, you may find you get a call once or twice a week from your person which wouldn't be too bad... but 12 times a day (and night) would be! If you feel you want to share your number, please talk to the Staying Well Team first.</p> <p>Hiding your number before you call.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a landline dial 141 and then the number. • From an Android device go to 'phone', press the vertical 3 dots for a drop down menu and select 'settings', select 'supplementary services', select 'showing caller ID' and click 'hide my number'. • From an Apple device go to 'settings', select 'phone', select 'show my caller ID', slide the circle to the left to hide number.
<p>What if I can't make a call for a while, eg. if I get ill?</p>	<p>Please let the Staying Well Team know as soon as possible so that they can make other arrangements if necessary.</p>
<p>What if the person I'm befriending doesn't pick up the phone?</p>	<p>Please try again after a few minutes. If no one picks up after you've tried three times, let the Staying Well team know. They may suggest you call on another day or that you leave it till the following week. Staying Well will follow up to make sure your person is ok.</p>
<p>What should I do if my person starts talking about something I'm not comfortable with?</p>	<p>If the subject of a conversation makes you feel uncomfortable, let your person know and suggest a different line of conversation.</p>



<p>What should I do if my person becomes upset?</p>	<p>These are emotional times for many of us. If your person becomes tearful, that's ok and it is unlikely to be because of something you said.</p> <p>Don't feel that you have to say something to fix things.</p> <p>The most important thing is that you are there and are listening.</p> <p>Sympathise with their feelings and, if appropriate and you want to, you could share a little of what you're feeling too.</p>
<p>What should I do if I become concerned about my person's safety and/or wellbeing?</p>	<p>If you are concerned about your person's safety due to someone in their home or elsewhere being a danger to them, inform the Staying Well Team as soon as you're off the call.</p> <p>If your concerns are about someone's self-care (either physically or mentally) let the Staying Well team know as soon as you're off the call.</p> <p>You can tell them about services that are available to them, including their local GP, A&E and community mental health support (e.g. Healthy Minds).</p> <p>If you are concerned that someone may be at risk of harming themselves let the Staying Well team know as soon as you're off the call.</p> <p>Remember it's ok to ask questions. You might be worried that asking questions might make them feel worse but people often find it helpful to talk to someone.</p>
<p>What happens if my person is ill, or there is some kind of emergency, whilst I am calling?</p>	<p>If you think someone has had a serious accident or there is a medical emergency while you are on a call, you should contact 999 immediately. Please also contact the Staying Well Team as they may have more information that will be useful for care/emergency services.</p>
<p>What happens if I want to, or need to stop befriending?</p>	<p>We understand that people's circumstances change over time. We just ask that you give us as much notice as possible so that we can ensure your Person can be re-matched for support to continue.</p> <p>We also understand that sometimes people just won't be a good match for each other. Volunteering as a Telephone Befriender should be a positive experience for both parties. If you don't feel your pairing is working for whatever reason talk to the Staying Well Team to discuss.</p>

**Who can I talk to?**

Telephone befriending can be **emotionally demanding** and you may find that you need to ‘offload’ too from time to time. It’s **very important that you continue to respect confidentiality**. People will not trust you if you gossip about them, or share their personal information with others.

As a Staying Well Volunteer you will have a **named contact within the Staying Well Team** and a direct phone number to talk to them.

Alternatively, **Peer 2 Peer – Listening Ear** is a service open 7 days a week from 8am – 8pm on 01422 392111, with a voicemail service outside operating hours. Confidential and supportive, this service is available to Calderdale Council volunteers during the COVID19 crisis.