



Cowal Elderly Befrienders SCIO

Keeping People Connected: To Services · To The Community · To Each Other

Scottish Charity No. SC024686

Volunteer Policy

Cowal Elderly Befrienders SCIO provides a range of Befriending Services designed to improve quality of life, reduce isolation and loneliness and keep older people independent and active for as long as possible in the communities they helped create.

Volunteers are central to the operating of Cowal Befrienders and deliver an average of 250 volunteering hours every month. They support every aspect of our service including: One-to-One Befriending; assisting with group activities and our Out & About service; fundraising and our new Befrienders Extra service which completes straightforward odd-jobs for our clients to help them remain independent in their own homes.

Purpose of our Volunteer Policy

This Volunteer Policy outlines how we involve volunteers in our work – including our recruitment and training process; the support provided to volunteers; an overview of our Policies and Procedures and what volunteers can expect from us as well as what we expect from you.

Our Vision and Mission for Volunteering

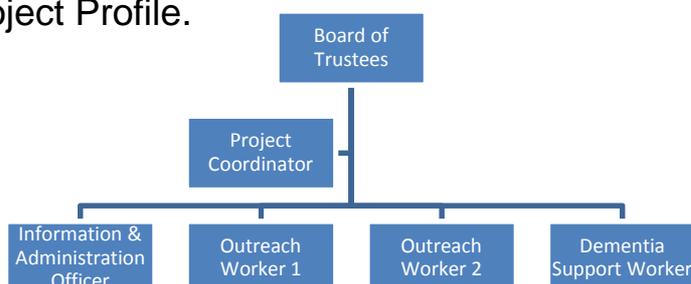
Cowal Elderly Befrienders will use volunteers to add value for our service users, as well as offering a greater range of activities and support. Through volunteering we will build relationships within the community and break down intergenerational, social and cultural barriers. We will also equip volunteers with new skills and experiences via the provision of a training calendar tailored to the needs of the individual.

Conduct

We look for volunteers who have empathy for the issues affecting older people as well as an upbeat and caring nature. We focus less on academic or professional qualifications, and instead value volunteers who are able to be supportive, respectful and non-judgemental of clients' circumstances.

Staff-Volunteer Relations

Cowal Befrienders has a team of 5 full-time staff, structured as below, supported by over 20 volunteers. More information about each of our staff roles can be found in our Project Profile.



Attracting Volunteers, Matching and Selecting

We have a range of roles for our volunteers to choose from, and we will always try to adapt or even create roles to match individual's skills and experience. The recruitment process involves completing our short application form, which can be done either online or via a printed version. You can also call in to the Befrienders Drop-In Centre at any time if you would like someone to complete the form with you.

Once we have received your completed application form we will send away for two references – upon satisfactory receipt of these we then require all new Volunteers to join the PVG Scheme. Upon completion of our Volunteer Induction Training you will be able to try various volunteering roles and Befrienders will work with you to find the most suitable position available.

Cowal Befrienders recognise the value of our volunteers and we want you to find the right role for you. You will have regular opportunities for Support and Supervision and this will help us to understand what it is that you most enjoy about volunteering with us and any changes that we can make to your role. Many of our long-serving volunteers have held 2 or 3 different roles with us! We usually

recommend that new volunteers start by helping with one of our group activities to get a better understanding of what we do before progressing to a more specialised role such as One-to-One Befriending. Once a role has been agreed with a volunteer it will be formally reviewed annually.

Induction and Training

Regardless of your role or past experience, all new volunteers attend a one day Induction Training session. The Induction includes a background of Cowal Befrienders as well as training in our Policies and Procedures; Boundaries in Befriending; Protection of Vulnerable Adults and will provide you with the opportunity to ask any questions that you may have about volunteering as well as the chance to meet fellow volunteers.

Cowal Befrienders also offers an annual programme of training workshops (usually 6), which, although not compulsory, are a great way to add to your skills and catch up with other staff and volunteers. Examples of previous training includes: certified First Aid, Bereavement Awareness, Food Hygiene, Dementia Awareness and even Relaxation Techniques! We are always happy to listen to volunteers' suggestions for training workshops and will try to accommodate them wherever possible.

Support and Supervision

All volunteers will receive formal support and supervision sessions from the Volunteer Coordinator. This will be weekly when you first join the Befrienders and will then continue on a twice yearly basis unless otherwise requested by yourself or the Volunteer Coordinator. In addition to the 2 face-to-face supervision sessions, volunteers can contact the Volunteer Coordinator in any way that is convenient for them; phone, email, in-person, etc, and we will make efforts to contact you through your preferred means. For volunteers assisting with group activities, there will always be a member of staff on hand to answer any questions that you may have and provide feedback at the end of activities.

Recognition and Reward

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of Cowal Befrienders. We simply couldn't run our service without their hard work and dedication. We always acknowledge the achievements of volunteers and organise several social gatherings each year, including a Christmas Cheese & Wine party where volunteers can share experiences and celebrate successes.

We recognise the insight that volunteers have in to the running of our service and offer all volunteers to express their views in an Annual Questionnaire. We are also more than happy to provide references for any volunteer applying for jobs, and offer a guaranteed interview to any volunteer applying for a position with Cowal Befrienders.

Expenses

We believe that no volunteer should be out of pocket by volunteering with us. All reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be paid for by Befrienders during your time volunteering with us. This includes any refreshments that you might need to buy when out with a client or group of clients, as well as mileage, currently paid at 40p per mile, should you need to use your own vehicle for Befrienders' activities. We ask volunteers to keep all receipts for expenses and submit them, along with a completed Expenses Form, by the 10th of each month. Reimbursement will be made by cheque.

Complaints Procedure

We hope that all volunteers will be very happy with their time with Befrienders. However, if you have any issues or complaints, please talk to the Volunteer Coordinator in the first instance. If you feel that the issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction you can contact a member of our Management Committee. Full details of the process can be found in our Complaints Procedure.

Confidentiality

As an organisation working with vulnerable adults, confidentiality is of the utmost importance to us. We have a Confidentiality Policy in place and expect all volunteers to adhere to it. Similarly, no photographs may be taken of clients or group activities without the prior permission of Cowal Befrienders, and whilst we have a Social Media strategy in place, we ask volunteers not to talk about Befrienders' activities on personal accounts without first talking about it with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

Data Protection

Each volunteer with Cowal Befrienders has their own record on our database which records their contact information, application form details and other information that the Volunteer Coordinator feels is relevant for the volunteer's or organisation's benefit. The database is password protected and complies with all data protection legislation. All volunteers have the right to see their record if requested.

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers should be aware that they can refuse demands or tasks that they consider unrealistic, beyond the scope of their role or that they do not have the skills to carry out. We want our volunteers to enjoy their time with us, so please speak to the Volunteer Co-ordinator if you feel uncomfortable about any aspect of your role.

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

We will attempt to attract volunteers from all sectors of the community and will positively encourage applications from disadvantaged groups. Our selection procedures will reflect that everyone has something to offer, and the allocation of volunteering tasks will aim to maximise the volunteering experience as a positive and beneficial one.

We will aim to reflect the diversity of the local population by working with volunteers with a range of needs, including high-support needs. Due to limitations in staff resources we will cap the number of volunteers with high-support needs that

we work with to 10% of the volunteer pool and may request that additional Support Workers accompany the volunteer if deemed necessary. We have a separate equality and diversity policy with more information.

Insurance, Health & Safety and Risk Management

All volunteers with Cowal Befrienders are covered by our Employers Liability Insurance as long as they operate within our Boundaries, Policies and Procedures (all of which are made clear during your Induction Training and are readily available in your Volunteer Handbook). Volunteers using their own vehicles during their volunteering should check with their insurer that they are covered – if an extra charge is made, Cowal Befrienders will reimburse the cost.

Volunteers will have our Health & Safety Policy explained to them during their Induction Training and should regularly remind themselves of the Risk Assessment for their role, available from the office. A trained First Aider and First Aid boxes are always available at any group activities.

Flexibility

Cowal Befrienders understand that our volunteers have responsibilities and commitments outside of Befrienders, and we embrace flexibility in our volunteering options. However, we do ask that you try to provide us with as much notice as possible of your absences so that we can arrange alternative cover and ensure continuity for our clients.

Endings

Volunteers may choose to end their time with us for a variety of reasons, and we fully respect this. We do ask that you provide us with some feedback on your experiences with us so that we can grow and develop our volunteering opportunities for others. Also, for volunteers involved in a one-to-one role, we ask that you give us with as much notice of your intentions as possible so that we can manage the end of the Befriending relationship appropriately for both you and your client.

Policy reviewed and updated by Duncan MacLeod.

August 2014 (next review due January 2015)