

## Befriending service: guide for referrers

### Purpose of the scheme:

To provide companionship and emotional support to elderly residents of Stokesley and district, combating the loneliness that can occur in later life. The befriending scheme is a free service delivered by fully vetted volunteers, who are carefully matched to ensure that we connect people with similar interests. Our volunteer befrienders will visit an older person in their home for a cup of tea and a chat, or perhaps accompany them on a short outing, to a café for example. Telephone befriending can also be provided.

Potential users of the service need to:

- Be socially isolated or lonely by reason of age or physical disability
- Be resident within our catchment area
- Have agreed to the referral, and are happy to participate in our assessment process
- Have needs and expectations that meet the service scope and capacity

While we welcome referrals for anyone who meets the above criteria, priority is given to those who:

- Live alone
- Have no, or very few, friends visiting on a regular basis
- Have no family close by
- Are not able to participate in or attend community activities
- Are unable to leave their home due to frailty or physical impairments
- Are age 65 or over
- Will most benefit from what volunteers are able to offer

### Service scope

The aim of the service is to provide social contact and companionship. We are **not** able to be:

- A replacement for paid care services
- A provider of personal care, domestic tasks, medication management or administration, or financial/legal advice
- A shopping service (SCCA provides shopping services which clients can be referred to)
- A respite service – if respite is needed for carers, please refer to our Carers Respite Sitting Service

### Circumstances in which the Befriending Service is not suitable

Our aim is to assess every referral individually for suitability but we regret that in some circumstances a person's needs may exceed the support available from our service. The following are unlikely to meet our eligibility criteria:

- Applicants with serious mental health, personality or behavioural problems, especially those in crisis or who we are unable to satisfactorily risk assess
- Those with memory or mental health issues if our service is to be their only means of support
- Those suffering from moderate to severe dementia who are not able to remember appointment times or form a rewarding relationship with a volunteer
- Those living in conditions which do not meet our health and safety standards. We risk-assess any environment our volunteers enter on our behalf

If a discussion would be beneficial prior to referral please call us on 01642 710085 and ask to speak to our Community Visiting Coordinator or email: [communityvisiting@stokesleycca.org.uk](mailto:communityvisiting@stokesleycca.org.uk)