

# **Volunteer Handbook**



## **Welcome**

Thank you for joining Mearns Kirk Helping Hands. The generous contribution of your time, skills, knowledge, and experience means we are able to provide our groups and activities which aim to reduce loneliness and isolation and improve health and wellbeing for those most in need in our community.

As you have agreed to gift us with your time, we want to provide you with an excellent experience of volunteering which we hope will go beyond participating as a volunteer. We aim to offer the best support, guidance, training, and development as we possibly can so that your time with us is mutually beneficial and enriching.

We also hope that you will feel part of a team, and that you feel able to contribute to the development of the charity. Your suggestions as to how we can improve the activities we offer will always be welcomed, and you will be given regular opportunities for input. It is also important to us that you feel valued and appreciated, and we hope you will enjoy the regular volunteer celebrations we provide.

This handbook will not give you all the answers and information you may need to carry out your role. It is one of many resources we offer our volunteers. You will also be directed to our Policies and Procedures, asked to participate in induction training and other training which may be useful or of interest to you. You will also be offered regular support sessions with the Volunteer Coordinator. We also encourage you to use your own skills, abilities, and knowledge to the advantage of our community. The Volunteer Coordinator will also be available should you need support or guidance at any point. Always remember, we work as a team, and you should never feel you are alone with any worries or concerns.

Please take the time to read through this handbook and keep it for your reference.

We hope you find your time at Mearns Kirk Helping Hands both enjoyable and rewarding.

***The MKHH Team.***



## **Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

### **Volunteer Expectations**

Mearns Kirk Helping Hands recognises that the volunteer role compliments, but does not replace, the role of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust, and mutual understanding.

#### **Volunteers can expect from us:**

- We will provide you with a comprehensive induction to your volunteering role.
- We will provide you with any additional training you may require carrying out your role safely and effectively.
- We will provide ongoing support and a named person you can talk to if you have any questions or concerns.
- We will ensure you know what to do or who to talk to if something goes wrong.
- We will make sure you have a clear understanding of the role you will be undertaking, including the days and times you will volunteer, the tasks you will carry out and who you will report to.
- We will ensure that you are able to carry out your duties in a safe environment.
- We will actively challenge discrimination in all its forms and encourage all volunteers to do the same.
- We will provide you with any equipment or materials you require to carry out your role.
- We will reimburse any out-of-pocket expenses and any mileage costs if you are using your own vehicle through the course of your volunteering.
- We will provide you with a reference should you chose to move on from volunteering with MKHH.





- We will make sure you feel welcomed, valued and part of a team by providing opportunities for all volunteers to celebrate their achievements, give ideas and suggestions to improve what we do and discuss any opportunities we may be able to support you to achieve which are relevant to your volunteering development.

**We expect of volunteers:**

- That you carry out your duties in line with MKHH Policies and Procedures, which will be clearly explained to you as part of your induction.
- That you carry out any tasks in a way which reflects the aims and values of MKHH.
- That you undertake any training we provide which is identified as required to allow you to carry out your duties safely and effectively.
- That you be on time to carry out your role and will let us know as soon as possible if you will not be able to attend or will be late on a day so that cover can be found.
- That you work as part of a team, valuing your fellow volunteers and their contributions and respecting the individual contributions each person makes to the successful running of our activities.
- That you claim any out of pocket or mileage expenses appropriately, providing any relevant receipts.
- That you let Project Staff know as soon as possible if you have any questions or concerns about your volunteering role.
- That you give suggestions and feedback in a constructive manner to allow the best possible outcomes for the work of MKHH.





## **Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

### **Volunteer Policy**

This Policy outlines Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH) intent regarding volunteers and volunteering. It should be read in conjunction with other Policies/ Procedures where referenced. MKHH recognises that the volunteering role compliments but does not replace the role of paid staff.

#### ***Recruitment and Selection***

MKHH welcomes the breadth of skills, experience and knowledge volunteers bring to our work. Our *Recruitment Process* involves an application, informal interview, trial period and two references. Some roles will also require a Disclosure Check. We base our selection of volunteers on the ability of those applying to carry out the role and associated tasks applied for. Those who are not selected will be offered an alternative role or, where appropriate, signposted to Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire for further volunteering opportunities.

#### ***Equality and Diversity***

MKHH is committed to creating an environment which promotes respect and values difference. We will not condone, tolerate or ignore any form of discrimination or unacceptable behaviour. We offer Equal Opportunities to anyone who wants to volunteer with us as outlined above. Please refer to our *Equal Opportunities Policy*.

#### ***Health and Safety***

We expect volunteers to take reasonable care of their own Health and Safety, and that of others who may be affected by your actions or omissions. Volunteers must be aware of and compliant with our *Health and Safety Policies*. All accidents, incidents and near misses must be appropriately reported. Volunteers must also undertake any relevant training with regard to Health and Safety.

#### ***Training and Development***

MKHH is committed to providing a quality volunteering experience. All volunteers will be provided with a comprehensive *Induction Programme* and ongoing training and development opportunities.



### ***Support and Recognition***

We offer ongoing support to our volunteers in the form of regular briefing meetings, volunteer team meetings, buddying and the offer of one to one meetings with the Volunteer Coordinator. The Project Manager also has an “open door” policy. Volunteer contributions to the shaping of the activities we provide are welcomed. We aim to recognise the invaluable contributions made by our volunteers with regular celebratory events.

### ***Data Protection and Confidentiality***

MKHH recognises that volunteers may come into contact with personal, sensitive information about people who use our services. We expect that all volunteers follow our *Privacy Policy* and *Confidentiality Guidance*.

### ***Expenses***

Volunteers may claim expenses for any travel undertaken as part of their volunteering duties, and any other reasonable out of pocket expenses with prior agreement of the Group Leader, Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager. Receipts should be provided.

### ***Insurance***

MKHH has Employers Liability and Public Liability Insurance. However, this does not cover your personal belongings.

### ***Use of Own Vehicle***

Should you choose to use your own car during your volunteering activities, your own insurance will usually cover you under “social, domestic and pleasure”, but you should check with your company prior to using your own car. You can claim mileage at the standard rate. Please refer to MKHH *Use of Own Vehicle Policy*.

### ***Substance Use***





Volunteering whilst under the influence of non- prescription drugs or alcohol will not be accepted. For further information please refer to our *Policy on Substance Use*.

### ***Media Enquiries***

Any media enquiries should be passed to the Project Manager in the first instance.

### ***Concerns/ Settling Differences***

MKHH will take any concerns seriously and will try to resolve any issues promptly, fairly, objectively and consistently, aiming for an amicable solution. We will endeavour to resolve such matters informally in the first instance; if this is not possible, we will follow our *Grievance or Complaints Policies and Procedures*. We would prefer to use internal processes to report any concerns, but this does not prevent volunteers making reports or referrals to statutory agencies as private individuals. For further information see our *Guidance On Raising An Issue*.

### ***Whistleblowing***

It is vitally important to MKHH that volunteers feel confident and know that they will be listened when raising concerns about any member of staff or volunteer behaving in a way likely to bring the charity into disrepute or causes financial loss. See our *Whistleblowing Policy* for further information.

### ***Safeguarding***

MKHH is committed to safeguarding and the wellbeing of all our volunteers, staff and group members. All volunteers are expected to behave appropriately at all times. All safeguarding concerns should be reported as soon as possible to the Project Manager. Please refer to our *Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy* and *Incident Reporting Procedure* for further guidance.





## **A Brief History of Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

Mearns Kirk Church had a long-standing history of providing services to the community, aiming to reach beyond the congregation. For many years, three groups existed providing such supports to the community. The Friendship Club, the Eastwood Bereavement Group and the Lunch and Social Club for People Living with Dementia were all run by teams of dedicated and skilled volunteers, with the Friendship Club now running for over 30 years.

In 2016 Mearns Kirk Helping hands was registered as a charity, with the aims of reduce isolation and loneliness and improving health and wellbeing for members of our community. As well as incorporating the three clubs mentioned above Mearns Kirk Helping Hands now runs many other groups and activities including:

- Tai chi and Strength and Balance classes
- Brew and Blether coffee afternoons
- IT learning groups
- Men's Breakfast Club
- Sporting Memories group

We also run a Befriending Project for older isolated or lonely members of our community.

These services can only run thanks to people like you offering their time and commitment to help. We look forward to sharing the next part of the Mearns Kirk Helping Hands journey with you!



## **Volunteer Handbook: Information on Communication**

At Mearns Kirk Helping Hands we rely on our volunteers to support the groups and activities we offer, and it is very important to us that volunteers feel valued and included. One of the best ways we can do this is to ensure we have good communication with our volunteers. We aim to keep you up to date with any developments, training opportunities or other important information. It is also important that volunteers feel able to contribute to decision making within MKHH, and can give feedback or offer suggestions.

### ***Day to Day Contact***

We recognise that communication is a “two-way street”. Later in this manual you will find contact details for our staff team. It is important that we hold current, accurate contact details for you. Preferably this will include an email address, as this is the most efficient way of sending out any communications. If you do not have an email address Project staff will be happy to help you to set one up. It is also important that you check your emails from time to time, particularly in the days coming up to the activity you are volunteering for, as there may be communication regarding to a change of arrangements for the day.

### ***Meetings***

Most of our regular groups hold a briefing meeting for volunteers before the members arrive. This allows the Group Leaders to pass on any relevant information for the session, to discuss any upcoming events etc. It is also an opportunity for volunteers to ask any questions or raise any concerns. If there is anything you are not sure about this is a good opportunity to raise it.

We understand that there may be issues or concerns you may have which you do not want to share with the whole group. You can always ask to speak to the Group Leader privately. Project staff are also available for you to talk to. You can phone, email, or make an appointment to come in for a chat.



Once a year we also hold an Annual General Meeting. This is a good opportunity to hear about what's happening in other parts of Mearns Kirk Helping Hands. We also see this as an opportunity to celebrate the wonderful contributions made by all our volunteers.

### ***Celebrations***

Celebrating our volunteers and thanking them for their generosity in contributing their time and skills is really important to us. A couple of times a year we aim to provide a social opportunity for all volunteers to come together, relax and have fun. This may be a meal, a dance or perhaps an outing. You will be kept up to date with any plans for such activities and given plenty of notice.

### ***Feedback and Suggestions***

There are many ways in which you can give feedback and suggestions to Mearns Kirk Helping Hands. You can offer ideas during any of the meetings mentioned above. If you prefer, you can email or speak to the Group Leaders or Project Staff directly. You can also ask the Project Manager to raise feedback or suggestions with the Board of Trustees or ask to be put in touch with the Trustees if you want to make a suggestion or give feedback directly. If you prefer to make a suggestion or give feedback anonymously you can send a letter or postcard addressed to Project Staff (see Who's Who for contact details). Your contributions are extremely valuable to us, so please don't be shy!





## **Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

### **Confidentiality and Boundaries: Guidance for Volunteers**

#### ***Confidentiality***

In your role as a volunteer with Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH) it is very likely that you will be in a position to read or hear information about participants, members or in certain circumstances other volunteers which would be considered personal or sensitive. As part of your induction training, you will attend sessions which cover the importance of confidentiality and General Data Protection Regulations. The information below provides further guidance for you to refer to including:

- The kind of information which would be considered personal/ sensitive.
- Why this information may (or may not) be shared with you.
- Your responsibilities regarding seeing or hearing such information.
- General good practice around information sharing

#### ***Personal/ Sensitive Information***

Any information about a person which may identify them is considered personal information. Names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, names of family members etc are all personal information. In some cases, even if information is anonymised (for example using initials only), there may be enough information to identify the person and the information is therefore still personal. In some instances, information about a person's background is asked for (for example the Lunch Club for People Living with Dementia). Again, this could identify someone, and is therefore personal.

Sensitive information would include information such as persons religious beliefs, political beliefs, marital status, sexuality, health issues and age/ date of birth.

#### ***Why Information May be Shared with You***

Personal information may be shared with you for quite straightforward reasons. For example, if you are a driver, you will need to know the address of the person you are collecting. If an outing is taking place, emergency contact details for those attending may be held by one or two volunteers to allow



them to act as Health and Safety volunteers for the duration of the outing. All members will have been asked to give written consent for this information to be held and shared appropriately due to the legitimate interests of MKHH and the member.

Members and volunteers are also asked whether we have permission to take and use pictures or recordings of them. This might be verbally, perhaps at an event, or when somebody wants to produce an article about a particular group. In some cases, for example the Lunch Club for People Living with Dementia, members or their carers are provided with a consent form which asks this question. It is very important that you make sure we have consent to take or share images of people before doing so. This includes use of images on websites and social media.

### ***Your Responsibilities***

Such information being shared with you does not mean that this information is no longer confidential. *A decision will have been taken that it is appropriate to share this information with you.* You must not share this information with anybody else, even another volunteer. It is particularly important that you do not take information such as names and addresses home with you without expressed consent from the individual.

Other information may be shared with you, particularly during briefing meetings, which is of a more sensitive nature. It may be information concerning the health of a member, or something pertinent from the life history of a member (perhaps a topic which should be avoided as it may cause distress). This is likely to be shared verbally. *You should consider any information which is shared with you in briefing meetings, or any similar situations, such as Volunteer Meetings, as confidential. It should not go any further than those in the room.* There are instances when confidentiality can be legitimately broken in relation to safeguarding, this is discussed later in the handbook and gives you guidance on when and how confidentiality can be legitimately breached.

### ***General Good Practice***

Always remember that as a volunteer you are in a privileged position with regard to personal and sensitive information about others. To share such





information is a breach of confidentiality (which may be Gross Misconduct- see separate guidance), and of the trust and reputation of MKHH. Before you share any information, however unimportant it may seem at the time, ask yourself:

*Why am I sharing this? Will it benefit the group member?*

If you keep this in mind you should keep yourself on the right track!

## **Boundaries**

The dictionary definition of boundaries is:

*"A real or imagined line that marks the edge or limit of something; the limit of a subject or principle" (Cambridge English Dictionary).*

When we talk about boundaries in the context of relationships, including relationships in volunteering, we usually mean the limit of what is appropriate and what is not in our behaviour towards others and others behaviour towards us. In volunteering and, it is important to be clear on our boundaries to you safe, as well group members.

You might find, particularly as you get to know people that you feel your boundaries begin to "slip". Slipping boundaries could include:

- You agree to speak or visit the person more frequently.
- You offer or receive gifts from the person.
- You directly help them with their bills and finances (signposting them to someone who can help via the project is acceptable).
- You help them with grocery shopping or going to appointments.

This list is not exhaustive but hopefully gives you an idea of when you might be overstepping boundaries. There are several reasons why this could happen:

- Uncertainty; for example, being unsure of the appropriate thing to do if offered a gift or asked a personal question.
- Not being assertive; for example, feeling as though you can't say no when someone asks you do something which is inappropriate.





- Not being trained appropriately; if appropriate boundaries have not been discussed, policies and procedures have not been shared etc. you might not know whether a certain behaviour is OK or not.

Having clear boundaries with the person you are befriending allows you to know your limits and keeps everybody safe. If you have any concerns, please don't hesitate to speak to project staff.



## **Information on Safeguarding**

The Care Quality Commission defines safeguarding as:

*“Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.”*

When we talk about safeguarding in the context of our work at MKHH, we generally mean helping to protect anybody deemed “vulnerable” (see below) by being aware of our responsibility to appropriately report any signs or evidence of harm, abuse or neglect.

## **Who “Needs” Safeguarding?**

We often use the term “vulnerable” when talking about adults who might need us to be aware and observant of signs, reports or evidence of harm, abuse or neglect. “Vulnerable Adults” are people who:

- are unable to safeguard themselves, their property, rights or other interests;
- are at risk of harm; **and**
- because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, are more vulnerable to being harmed than others who are not so affected

According to the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, anyone who meets these criteria is considered to require appropriate safeguarding action should anyone suspect or know that the person is at risk of harm. ***Remember that the criteria must be considered as a whole, not the individual parts. For example, a person may have a disability but be perfectly able to safeguard themselves.***

## **What is harm?**

You may not realise that different elements can constitute as harm. This may include:

Physical harm

Psychological harm





Financial harm

Sexual harm

Neglect

Harm can occur anywhere, and the person causing harm may be a stranger or may be known to the person being harmed. They may be a relative, a friend, a volunteer or a professional.

During your induction training you will have explored case studies, discussing if harm is happening to an individual and what to do if you believe it is. If you do suspect someone is being harmed, you are able to breach their confidentiality and let someone know; it is important to tell the person that this is what you have to do.

The only expectation on you as a volunteer is that you report your concerns to project staff, who will listen to your concerns and help to decide if harm is occurring. Staff will also discuss your concerns to the Safeguarding Officer who will decide whether to make an Adult Support and Protection Report. You may be asked to help with this process by, for example, providing more information if you can, but you will not be responsible for making the Report.

The Adult Support and Protection Report is made via the Local Council; reports are referred to a Multi-Agency Adult Protection Committee, who will then decide whether to act and if so, what is the most appropriate action.

***Remember, it is always better to raise a concern that not to, even if you are unsure. Staff will be happy to talk through your concerns with you and support you with any feelings of worry or anxiety these concerns may be causing you.***



## **Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

### **Health and Safety: Guidance For Volunteers**

At Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH), the health, safety, and wellbeing of all our volunteers and group members is paramount. We have a comprehensive Health and Safety Policy which you will read as part of your induction.

This document is designed to give you some further information and guidance on your responsibilities towards Health and Safety as a volunteer.

#### ***Personal Responsibility and Reporting***

Although the Board of Trustees and Project Manager have overall responsibility for Health and Safety within MKHH, it is everybody's responsibility to take care of the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. If you are aware of any reason why you cannot safely carry out the duties assigned to you, you should alert Project Staff. This may be because of a potential risk to you, another volunteer, or a group member. Project Staff will take appropriate steps to make sure the risk is eliminated or minimised. If they are unable to do so the activity will not go ahead.

#### ***Environmental Hazards***

If you see a potential hazard in the environment in which an activity is taking place, for example a loose wire or carpet tile, you must report it immediately to Project Staff. Such repairs will be reported and dealt with by the appropriate person. Do not attempt to make any such repairs yourself or provide a temporary "fix". The Halls are overseen by a Fabric Committee, and it is their responsibility to ensure such repairs or replacements are carried out to an appropriate standard.

Some common sense applies here. If you see an object which is easy to pick up and move blocking a doorway or lying on a step, move it, providing it is safe to do so and not too heavy. This applies particularly to objects blocking fire exits. If it is a heavier object, such as a table, you should ask for help. Do not attempt to move objects requiring more than one person to move it by yourself. We will provide regular manual handling training to ensure volunteers know safe ways of lifting and moving objects.





### ***Risk Assessments***

All our activities are risk assessed to make sure they are as safe as possible before being carried out. You should familiarise yourself with the various risk assessments which apply to the duties you are undertaking. You will be provided with copies of any relevant risk assessments. This is particularly important during occasional events such as outings, where procedures are likely to be different to those which apply in the halls. Risk assessments are live, working documents, and only work as a risk management tool if those undertaking the activities are familiar with them and adhere to them.

### ***Providing Assistance with Wheelchairs/ Seating etc***

The nature of some of the activities we run makes it likely that some of our group members require assistance getting in and out of chairs, vehicles or wheelchairs. Some may also require wheelchairs to be pushed. *You are under no obligation to provide this kind of assistance*, though you may be happy to do so. If you are, and you have already undertaken Moving and Positioning Training (in the last 3 years), you should provide the Group Leader, Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager with a copy of your certificate. If you are happy to do so but have not undertaken Moving and Positioning Training, please let either the Group Leader, Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager know, and we will provide you with the appropriate training as soon as we can.

### ***Providing Assistance with Personal Care and Medication***

You will not be expected to assist any members with personal care tasks, or with taking medication whilst they are at our activities. If a member brings medication with them and asks that you remind them to take it at a particular time, that is fine. You should also not give a member any medication of your own (for example, giving a painkiller you might have with you), as medications can interact negatively with other medications a member might be taking.

### ***Fire Action***

At least once a year fire drills will be carried out with each group. It is important that you follow what you are asked to do as these are "rehearsals" for what will happen if the fire alarm sounds due to a real fire. The more



familiar you are with this, the more likely it is that everyone will be able to exit the building unharmed in the event of a fire. Each group or activity will have their own way of managing their volunteers and members (for example who holds the attendance register). It is therefore important that if you volunteer for more than one group you attend all relevant drills. When the fire alarm sounds, be it a pre-planned drill or not, a Fire Marshall will take the lead and you must follow instructions given by this person, or members of the Fire Brigade.

*Remember that advice from the Fire Service in the event of a fire is "get out, stay out". Volunteers have no responsibility to attempt to use fire extinguishers, or to re-enter the building to look for other volunteers or group members. Your own safety and wellbeing is of primary importance- once you are out of the building it is the job of the emergency services to do the rest.*

### ***Illness***

If you are feeling unwell on a day you are due to volunteer, it is advisable that you contact the Group Leader or Project Staff and say that you will not be coming in. This is particularly relevant if the activity you are undertaking involves the preparation or serving of food. Do not "struggle" to come in if you are feeling unwell. Anything contagious may be passed to others, and you may end up making yourself even more poorly. MKHH understands that volunteers often feel they are "letting the group down" in these circumstances, but we would far rather have you return healthy and properly rested. All groups have a contingency plan to cover in the event of a volunteer or volunteers being unwell.

### ***Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)***

There may be certain duties you undertake which will require PPE. For example, you will need an apron to help in the kitchen. The issuing of such equipment will be part of the risk assessment for the activity so you must use these items if instructed as part of your role. Failure to do so will mean that the activity is no longer following the risk assessment and will therefore be deemed unsafe to continue.

### ***First Aid***





As part of your ongoing training, you will be offered First Aid Training. This is usually an enjoyable session and provides you with useful skills for assisting in emergency situations. *However, this does not make you responsible should another volunteer or group member become ill or sustain a serious injury during our activities. In such situations the most appropriate course of action is always to call emergency services,* regardless of whether it occurs within the halls or when you are out, perhaps on a trip. If you are trained, you may be able to make the person more comfortable while you wait for medical staff to attend. If a very minor injury is sustained, which would not require a visit to accident and emergency (a small cut or graze for example), and you have undertaken First Aid Training, you may wish to assist the person. However, remember *you are under no obligation to do so*. Where at all possible in such cases the person should treat the injury themselves.

During your induction you will be shown where the deliberator is in the building; anyone can use it if required.

### ***Reporting and Recording***

Please remember, any accidents or injuries, however minor, sustained during our activities, must be recorded in the Accident Book (located in the first aid room). Even a minor injury may point to a change in practice or equipment being required which could prevent something more serious occurring in the future (see separate guidance on *Reporting Accidents*).

In some situations, you may also be asked to help staff complete an Incident Report. Incidents may be something which does not cause an accident, harm or injury, but still points to a requirement for change in practice or equipment to prevent further incidents occurring. An example of this would be a “near miss”, where an injury *could have* occurred but did not when a piece of ceiling tile fell in. If you need to complete an Incident Report, or are unsure about whether to report something, speak to staff who will be happy to advise and assist.

### ***Weather***

The weather can also play a part in how safe it is to run our activities. Particularly for drivers, ice, high winds, snow, or heavy rain could make outings or getting to the halls hazardous. The Group Leader and Project Manager may





take the decision to call off an activity if it is deemed unsafe for people to travel. Volunteers also have responsibility to decide for themselves that it would not be safe to attend due to bad weather. Your health and safety are of utmost importance, and if you judge it unsafe to drive or travel, even if the activity is still scheduled to go ahead, you should simply notify Project Staff. (See also *Use of Own Vehicle Policy*).

### ***Mental Wellbeing***

Health and safety extends to our mental wellbeing. If you are experiencing worry or stress, feeling low or anxious, or simply not feeling “yourself”, we want to support you as best we can. If you feel you can talk to Project staff about how you are feeling, we will try our very best to support you, or put you in contact with the best person or people to talk to. There is also a list of support agencies included in this handbook which may be of use to you in your volunteering role

*We cannot account for every eventuality which might occur during your time as a volunteer with MKHH. But by following all guidance and risk assessments, working as a team, using common sense, planning, and reporting appropriately we can greatly reduce the likelihood of accidents and injuries to both volunteers and group members.*





## **Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

### **Raising an Issue: Guidance for Volunteers**

At Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH) we value and respect all our volunteers and the contribution they make to the activities we provide. We strive to give volunteers the best ongoing training, support, and guidance possible.

Wherever possible, we expect that issues which may arise during your volunteering activities can be resolved without recourse to a formal Complaint Process. However, we understand that sometimes issues may arise which may lead to volunteers feeling unhappy or frustrated, and we wish to resolve such situations fairly, transparently, and consistently.

This document is designed to guide you through the process of raising an issue in relation to your volunteering activities. This could be about:

- Lack of training or support
- The duties you are being asked to undertake
- Issues with a group member
- Issues with another volunteer
- Issues with a member of staff

Though this list is not exhaustive. You should also be aware of the MKHH Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, which will tell you what you should do if you have any concerns regarding a group member.

### **Informal Processes**

#### ***Self Management:***

As stated above, we would hope that most issues can be resolved before reaching a formal complaint. We hope that through ongoing training, support and guidance volunteers feel confident enough in their roles to resolve many issues either by themselves or by working alongside their fellow volunteers:

If your concern is about another volunteer, we would encourage you to try to discuss the matter with the individual in the first instance.

If you feel you are not receiving adequate training or support to carry out your role you should highlight this with your Group Leader or the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.





If a group member is being challenging, please remember it is the responsibility of the whole team to manage the dynamic in the group and you should not feel you have to deal with difficult behaviour on an individual basis.

It is important that all volunteers feel they can speak out when they are not happy with a situation. There are briefing meetings before each activity, this is a good opportunity to raise issues. Please do not let things you are unhappy about go unmentioned. This can lead to feelings of frustration building up and becoming unpleasant. If you really feel you cannot speak during a briefing meeting, you could request a word with the Group Leader at some point during the activity.

### ***Speaking with Someone:***

If you are unhappy about something and feel you cannot resolve the matter yourself, you should first speak with your Group Leader. If the Group Leader is unable to resolve the matter, or the problem is with the Group Leader, you should ask to speak to the Project Manager. Again, if the Project Manager is unable to resolve the matter, or the problem is with the Project Manager, you should ask to speak with the Chair of Trustees. At each and any of these steps your discussion will be treated as “informal”, until the point where you decide to make a formal complaint (there are exceptions to this which are outlined below). Before approaching the Group Leader, Project Manager or Chair of Trustees you should be clear about both what the issue is and how you would like to see the issue resolved.

Circumstances where it will not be possible to keep a discussion informal include:

- Where the matter you raise indicates that you, another volunteer, a group member, or a member of staff are at risk of harm or abuse. For example, raising unexplained injuries to a member which might indicate physical abuse.
- Where the matter you raise indicates a breach of the law and therefore requires police involvement. For example, theft or physical violence.

In either of these cases, whomever you raise the matter with will have a duty of care to follow appropriate reporting guidelines, either to the police or following Safeguarding reporting procedures.



## **Formal Process**

If you have exhausted all the above and still do not feel the matter has been resolved, or if you feel the issue you have is too serious to be dealt with informally, you should follow the Complaints Process (*see Complaints Process*):

### ***Raising a Complaint:***

You will be required to complete a Complaints Form (*see Complaints Form*). The form will ask you for details about the nature of your complaint, any persons involved and how you would like to see the matter resolved. As noted above, there may be circumstances where what you report will lead to an outcome dictated by Safeguarding or Legal reporting requirements.

Your Complaint Form should be given/ sent to either your Group Leader or the Project Manager, who will then begin the formal Complaint Process.

You may, of course, choose to submit your Complaint Form anonymously. Your complaint will still be dealt with as outlined above, though without your presence. You should therefore bear in mind that this will mean that you will be unable to have any further input into the process and may not be informed of the outcome of your complaint.

The Complaint Process is designed for individual complaints only. Where a group of people have a mutual complaint, individual complaints should still be submitted. This will help us to look at the “bigger picture”, and to identify any patterns or omissions occurring within a particular group.

### **If you are still not happy...**

If you still feel we have not fully resolved your complaint you should contact OSCR (The Scottish Charity Regulator) to further discuss your complaint:

OSCR, 2nd Floor, Quadrant House,  
9 Riverside Drive,  
Dundee DD1 4NY.

[www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk)

01382 220446





## **Mearns Kirk Helping Hands** **Volunteer Expenses Policy**

### ***Introduction***

Mearns Kirk Helping Hands values volunteers, and we want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred as part of a volunteer's role will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel. To claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed and handed into the Group Leader, Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager. This process will also be explained during your induction.

### ***Activity covered by this policy***

Any involvement/activity as agreed between the volunteer and Group Leader/ Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager.

### ***What expenses will be paid for?***

- Travel, including bus, train, taxi or car (car mileage will be paid at the HMRC travel rate of 45p per mile). This is currently capped at £5 per volunteering session (reflecting travel within the boundary of East Renfrewshire).
- Any other out of pocket expenses as agreed with the Group Leader, Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager.

A valid ticket, receipt or copy invoice will be needed to accompany a claim for expenses.

### ***Making a claim***

When a volunteer wants to make a claim, they should fill out a 'Volunteer Expenses Form' which will be provided by the Group Leader or Project Manager. These can be printed and hand-written or completed electronically and emailed (the totals autofill when completed electronically.)

Expense forms should be completed and submitted regularly, and not allowed to run on beyond 2 months.





The Group Leader, Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager will be responsible for signing and to authorise payments for volunteer expenses. In the absence of the Group Leader, Volunteer Coordinator or Project Manager, authorisation can be given by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

When an expense form has been completed and authorised a payment will then be made to the volunteer either by cash or cheque.



## **Useful Contacts**

Below are the contact details of the current staff team at Mearns Kirk Helping Hands:

### ***Vicky Attwood***

Vicky is the Project Manager for Mearns Kirk Helping Hands and oversees the day to day running of the charity. She is full time and is ordinarily located in the MKHH office in the halls during office hours.

Phone: 07858552767

Email: [vicky.attwood@mkhelpinghands.org.uk](mailto:vicky.attwood@mkhelpinghands.org.uk)

### ***Laura Watts***

Laura is the Volunteer Coordinator for Mearns Kirk Helping Hands and recruits, supports, and manages the volunteer team. She is full time and ordinarily located in the MKHH office in the halls during office hours.

Phone: 07926696972

Email: [laura.watts@mkhelpinghands.org.uk](mailto:laura.watts@mkhelpinghands.org.uk)

### ***Liz Highet***

Liz is the Project Worker supporting the Befriending Project. She is full time and is community based.

Phone: 07754 845650

Email: [liz.highet@mkhelpinghands.org.uk](mailto:liz.highet@mkhelpinghands.org.uk)

### ***Maryam Khan***

Maryam is the Project Support Worker supporting groups and activities that take place within the halls. She is part time (Monday and Friday 9-5, Tuesday 1.30 - 5) and is located in the MKHH office in the halls.

Email: [maryam.khan@mkhelpinghands.org.uk](mailto:maryam.khan@mkhelpinghands.org.uk)



***Our current Board of Trustees are:***

**Fiona Macleod (Chair)**

**Robert Paton (Treasurer)**

**Isobel Dawson**

**Graeme Bell**

**Aileen Loudon**

**Heather Smyth**

To contact the Board of Trustees, please phone or email the Project Manager or Volunteer Coordinator who will provide you with appropriate contact details. You will not be asked the reason for wanting to contact the Trustees. Trustees do not have dedicated MKHH emails or phone numbers; they use personal emails and phone numbers. For this reason we do not publish them in our literature or on our website.





## Useful Information

There may be times during your volunteering activities when the person you befriend, members, family members, carers or even other volunteers ask you for information or advice. You aren't expected to act in the capacity of an advisor, counsellor or to give solutions to problems people might be experiencing. However, it can be useful to know about a few other organisations who provide such information and advice, so that you can "signpost" people on to them. This list is very much a starter selection, to which you can add any other useful contacts you may have or find. Project staff will also be happy to provide any information about other agencies you might need to pass on to somebody.

<b>Service/ Organisation</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
<b>Adults and Older People Team (East Renfrewshire Council)</b> Information, advice and support for some of the most common problems faced by older people.	0141 577 3000  <a href="http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/aop">www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/aop</a>
<b>Advocacy Project</b> Providing independent advocacy to people aged 65+ in East Renfrewshire.	<a href="https://www.theadvocacyproject.org.uk/advocacy-services/east-renfrewshire/">https://www.theadvocacyproject.org.uk/advocacy-services/east-renfrewshire/</a>  0141 420 0961
<b>Age Scotland</b> A whole range of information, resources and services for older people.	0800 12 44 222  <a href="http://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland">www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland</a>
<b>Alzheimer's Scotland</b> The leading dementia organisation in Scotland.	0808 808 3000  <a href="http://www.alzscot.org">www.alzscot.org</a>



<p><b>Citizens Advice Bureau (Barrhead)</b></p> <p>Local, independent charity providing free and confidential advice and information whoever you are and whatever your problem.</p>	<p>0141 881 2032</p> <p><a href="http://www.cas.org.uk">www.cas.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Community Addiction Team</b></p> <p>Help available for individuals or families experiencing difficulties or problems with alcohol and/ or drug use.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/alcohol-and-drug-services">www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/alcohol-and-drug-services</a></p>
<p><b>Community Hub at Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire</b></p> <p>Set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, you can get advice, help or they will be able to signpost to the relevant agency. Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm</p>	<p><a href="http://weastrencommunityhub.org.uk">weastrencommunityhub.org.uk</a></p> <p>0141 876 9555</p>
<p><b>East Renfrewshire Carers Centre</b></p> <p>Providing practical and emotional support to carers and young carers.</p>	<p>0141 638 4888</p> <p><a href="http://www.eastrenfrewshirecarers.co.uk">www.eastrenfrewshirecarers.co.uk</a></p>



<p><b>East Renfrewshire Women's Aid</b></p> <p>Providing support to women, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.</p>	<p>0800 027 1234</p> <p><a href="http://www.wasler.org.uk">www.wasler.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Money Advice and Rights Team (East Renfrewshire Council)</b></p> <p>Support and advice on financial circumstances including debt, benefits and income maximisation.</p>	<p>0141 577 8420</p> <p><a href="http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/mart">www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/mart</a></p>
<p><b>RAMH (Recovery Across Mental Health)</b></p> <p>Provides professional care and services to those affected by mental ill health.</p>	<p>0141 881 8811</p> <p><a href="http://ramh.org">ramh.org</a></p>
<p><b>Samaritans</b></p> <p>A safe place for people to talk, any time they like, about what's getting to them.</p>	<p>116 123</p> <p><a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a></p>





## Mearns Kirk Helping Hands

### Policy and Procedure Checklist for Volunteers

This document allows volunteers to make sure they have read all Mearns Kirk Helping Hands Policies and Procedures relevant to their volunteering role.

***By signing and dating alongside each policy/ procedure you are agreeing that you have read, understood and will work to the relevant policy/ procedure.***

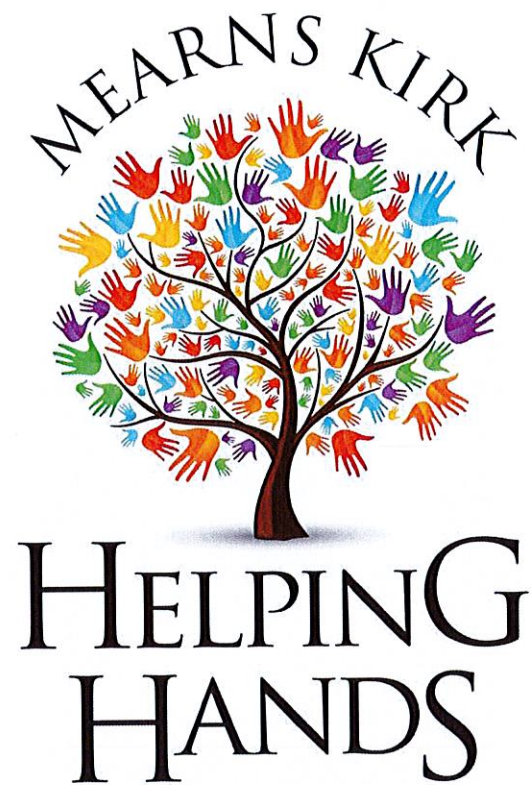
If there is anything you are unsure or unclear about you should speak to your Group Leader, the Project Manager or Volunteer Coordinator before signing.

Policy/ Procedure	Date	Sign
Accident Reporting Procedure		
Code of Conduct		
Complaints procedure		
Dignity at work		
Equal Opportunities Policy		
Fundraising Policy		
Health and Safety Policy		
Incident Reporting Procedure		
Lone Working Policy		
Managing Endings with Volunteers		
Privacy Policy		
Social Media Policy		
Substance use Policy		
Use of IT Policy		
Use of own vehicle Policy		
Whistleblowing Policy		

Volunteer Name:

Volunteer Start Date:

Date of Completion:



**Further information  
for Volunteer  
Befrienders**



## What is a Befriending Service?

*"Befriending offers supportive, reliable relationships through volunteer befrienders to people who would otherwise be socially isolated".* This is how Befriending Networks describes befriending. It is a simple yet powerful way of providing someone with companionship and interaction that can have many benefits. These include reducing loneliness, increasing confidence and self-esteem, helping to find new interests. Befriending can also take the pressure off other essential services such as GPs that some people may use as a way of gaining social contact.

As a volunteer befriender you will be making a huge difference to someone's life. For one hour, once a week you might be visiting someone in their home for a cup of tea and a chat, or perhaps playing a game or watching TV together. If the person can get out and about you might accompany them to a local group or activity that is of interest to them, helping build their confidence in going out and trying new things.

A match between a volunteer befriender and the beneficiary of the service or "befriendee" is carefully considered. Staff will try to base the match on personality, shared interests, hobbies, location etc. However, it is more of an art than a science! You will always be consulted about potential matches prior to an introductory visit. The relationship is also nurtured through support from project staff, and you will receive regular support via phone calls and meetings with the staff to check that you are happy with the way the match is going.

## **What Befriending is not**

Boundaries are very important in a befriending relationship and it's important to remember you are there to provide companionship only. Befriending does **not** involve:

- Assisting with any personal care such as helping with dressing, toileting, or bathing.
- Doing any household chores or shopping **for\*** the person you befriend.
- Assisting with money, for example helping with online payments, bill payments, or collecting money from a cashpoint for the person. Do not





handle any cash, bank cards, cheque books etc belonging to the person you befriend even if they ask you to do so.

- Assistance with medication. Do not handle any medication belonging to the person you befriend even if they ask you to do so, and do not provide them with any medication you might have with you such as paracetamol or aspirin.
- Providing any assistance with financial matters such as checking bank statements or assisting with the completion of a benefit claim form.
- Assisting with managing mail, such as opening or reading bills or letters the person may be concerned about.
- Providing support to and from appointments or accompanying people to appointments.

\*You may decide to go shopping together as an activity, perhaps to purchase clothing etc. But you should not *regularly* be accompanying the person to do *grocery shopping* as an activity, nor should you do any shopping on behalf of the person you befriend. Even picking up a few grocery items as a “one off” can lead to repeat requests/ expectations and the need for cash to exchange hands. If the person requires this support, please inform staff who will be able to help. Similarly, it is fine to make a cup of tea for you both in the persons home if they are happy for you to do so. However, this should not extend to preparing meals, such as a sandwich for lunch. This can lead to repeated requests/ expectations and becomes support which should be provided from elsewhere. If you have any concerns that the person is unable to prepare meals for themselves, speak to staff who will be able to assist in getting the right support in place.

There are other organisations that can provide these kinds of supports and beneficiaries can be linked in with them. If, as a volunteer befriender, you have any concerns about something you have been asked to do by the person you befriend, or you are not sure if you can do a certain activity, speak to project staff first who will advise you. It is perfectly acceptable to tell the person you befriend that project guidelines do not allow you to carry out certain tasks if you are asked to do so. All beneficiaries will have been given a copy of Befriending Project guidelines on what befriending is and is not and had this explained to them prior to being matched. Staff will be happy to go over this again with the person you befriend if required.



## **Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

### **Health and Safety: Guidance For Befrienders**

At Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH), the health, safety, and wellbeing of all our volunteers and beneficiaries is paramount. We have a comprehensive Health and Safety Policy which will be provided for you to read to accompany this document. We also have Public Liability Insurance in place which covers your volunteering activity.

This document is designed to give you some further information and guidance on your responsibilities towards Health and Safety as a volunteer.

#### ***Personal Responsibility and Reporting***

Although the Board of Trustees and Project Manager have overall responsibility for Health and Safety within MKHH, it is everybody's responsibility to take care of the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. If you are aware of any reason why you cannot safely carry out the duties assigned to you, you should alert Project Staff immediately. This may be because of a potential risk to you, another volunteer, or a beneficiary. Project Staff will take appropriate steps to make sure the risk is eliminated or minimised. If they cannot do so the activity will not go ahead.

#### ***Risk Assessments***

Prior to being accepted for a befriender all beneficiaries are assessed to ensure they meet the criteria for the service, that they want the service, and that understand what the service provides. An environmental risk assessment of the person's home will also be completed by staff to ensure the environment is safe before volunteers carry out any home visits.

If you are visiting the beneficiary at home and something appears to be a risk to you or the beneficiary, please report this to project staff immediately. If the risk is such that you do not feel safe being in the beneficiary's home, please leave as soon as possible and let staff know you have done so and why.

If you are planning an outing with the beneficiary to a café or group activity, a separate risk assessment for this activity will be completed with you by project staff.





### ***Aiding with Wheelchairs/ Seating etc.***

A beneficiary, when on an outing, may require assistance with walking, seating or using a wheelchair. This will be discussed with you prior to matching. *You are under no obligation to provide such assistance* to the person you befriend; however, you may if you are happy to do so. If you are happy to provide this kind of support we ask that you undertake Moving and Positioning training first; we will provide for you. This training will give you the safe techniques and confidence to be able to support someone in this way.

### ***Illness***

If you are feeling unwell on a day you are due to volunteer, please let project staff know. They will contact the person you are matched with and let them know that you are unable to call or visit today and arrange for the visit to be rescheduled. You may feel as though you are letting the person down, however, it is important that you feel well enough to carry out your role. Visiting when unwell may also pose a risk to the person you are visiting if the illness is something which can be passed on.

### ***Lone Working***

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. As a volunteer befriender, particularly when visiting someone at home, your volunteering comes into this category. Risk is something that all volunteers may encounter, and this document outlines some of the ways in which we manage risk. However, it is acknowledged that lone working, through volunteer befriending may involve additional risk including:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur when there is no-one to call for help or first aid available.
- Violence or the threat of violence.
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone.

To minimise risk while lone working, we ask that when you make a call or visit, you keep this to the same day and time each week. This is so we know when you





are going to be volunteering your time to talk with or visit the beneficiary. If this needs be changed for any reason, for safety reasons it is important to let project staff know in advance.

We will provide you with a mobile phone that you can use to make calls, or you may choose to use your own phone. When you are visiting or going out with the person you are befriending, we ask that you ring or send a text just before you meet with them, so we know you have arrived safely. We ask that you do the same upon ending the visit. This allows project staff to know that you have safely arrived and left the visit and, if you don't do this, alerts project staff that there could be an issue and allows us to investigate further.

Mearns Kirk Helping Hands has a Lone Working Policy that should be read to accompany this information.

### ***First Aid***

As part of your ongoing training, you will be offered First Aid Training. This is usually an enjoyable session and provides you with useful skills for assisting in emergency situations. *However, this does not make you responsible should the person you befriend become ill or have an accident during your visit. In such situations the most appropriate course of action is always to call emergency services,* regardless of whether it occurs at a home visit or during an outing. If you are trained, you may be able to make the person more comfortable while you wait for medical staff to attend. If a very minor injury is sustained, which would not require a visit to accident and emergency (a small cut or graze for example), and you have undertaken First Aid Training, you may wish to assist the person. However, *remember you are under no obligation to do so.* Where at all possible in such cases the person should treat the injury themselves.

### ***Reporting and Recording***

Please remember any accidents or injuries, however minor, sustained by you or the person you befriend during a visit or outing should be reported to Project Staff. Even a minor injury may indicate that the person needs some additional help or support to prevent anything more serious happening. We will ask you to



help us complete an Accident Report Form detailing the time, location and nature of the injury.

### ***Incident Reporting***

An incident is not the same as an accident but is something which still requires action from staff to help us manage potential future risk. An incident could be a “near miss”. For example, you go for a walk round a shopping centre with the beneficiary and then realise that they cannot walk as far as they thought and suddenly require assistance. In these kind of situations it is again important that you let staff know so that measures can be put in place to prevent future incidents arising.

### ***Weather***

The weather can also play a part in how safe it is to visit someone or go on an outing. If on the day you are due to visit the weather is poor and conditions may mean it is dangerous to walk or drive to the visit, please let project staff know and we will rearrange the visit.

### ***Mental Wellbeing***

Health and safety extends to our mental wellbeing. If you are experiencing worry or stress, feeling low or anxious, or simply not feeling yourself, we want to support you as best we can. If you feel you can talk to Project Staff, we will listen and try our very best to support you. If necessary, we can also put you in contact with the best person or people to talk to. There is also a list of support agencies included in this handbook which may be of use to you in your volunteering role. *Please do not sit with any worries or concerns about your volunteering.* Staff are here to help and will be happy to meet with you or chat on the phone to talk things over. We want the experience of befriending to be an enjoyable one for you and for you to feel comfortable and supported in your role.



*We cannot account for every eventuality which might occur during your time as a volunteer with MKHH. But by following all guidance and risk assessments, working as a team, using common sense, planning, and reporting appropriately we can greatly reduce the likelihood of accidents and injuries to both volunteers and group members.*

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## **Things to Consider When Befriending**

We want volunteering as a befriender to be an enjoyable experience for both you and the person you are matched with. However, your safety is paramount. Below we have outlined some risks that could be associated with your befriending and what you can do to minimise these risks. If you are uncertain about anything at any time, please check in with Project Staff who can advise you.

### **Traveling to/from a visit**

#### **By Car**

If driving to and from visits, please ensure that your vehicle has insurance, that you have informed Project Staff you are using your car for the purposes of volunteering, and you have completed a "Drivers Declaration Form". If driving conditions are poor due to the weather, then please don't attempt to use your car. Instead, please inform Project Staff that you will need to change or cancel your visit.

#### **By Public Transport**

If travelling by public transport, please be aware that it is a good idea to plan your journey in advance. Trains and buses can be cancelled at short notice, so it is advisable to check before you travel and let project staff know if there are any delays to your journey so they can let the person you befriend know you may be late.

#### **On Foot**

If travelling on foot, take general common sense pedestrian precautions, particularly if you are walking in an unfamiliar area. Be aware of uneven road/pavement surfaces that could lead to a trip or fall. If weather conditions are poor and you do not feel safe to travel on foot, let Project Staff know and your visit can be changed or cancelled. In the winter when days are shorter make sure you stick to well lit paths.



### **During your visit (if visiting at home)**

#### **Slips, trips and falls**

Prior to you visiting the person you are befriending at home; Project Staff will undertake an environmental risk assessment which will be shared with you before your first visit. However, environments are changeable, so please be aware of any loose carpets/rugs/objects that could be a trip hazard when you enter the home. If you notice anything during your visit that you think could put the person you are visiting at harm, please inform Project Staff as soon as possible.

#### **Pets**

Again, prior to you visiting the person you befriend, Project Staff will inform you if the person has any pets. If allergies are an issue or the pet is liable to be unsure around strangers, we will ask that the person you are visiting put their pet in a different room before you visit. You can also tell us if you prefer not to be matched with a person who has pets.

#### **Other people present in the home**

Prior to you being matched with the person you are befriending, Project Staff will inform you whether they live alone, have other family members who live with them, or have carers who visit at certain times. However, when visiting, you might encounter other visitors who are there or arrive unexpectedly and are therefore unknown to Project Staff.

Ensure that when befriending you have access to a charged mobile phone and have Project Staff numbers stored in your phone. Please check in and out with staff by text to let them know you have arrived safely and left your visit.

If there are visitors there unexpectedly when you arrive, you are under no obligation to stay on the visit. If you leave, please inform Project Staff that this is what you have done and why.

If for any reason you feel unsafe during the visit, leave immediately. If this isn't possible and you are in immediate danger, phone the police. If it is not safe for you to do so, say you need to check in with the Project Staff and phone using





the phrase "I have left my diary at the office". This will alert Project Staff that you are in danger, and they will phone the police to attend at the address you are visiting. It is *extremely unlikely* you will ever be in this situation as we carry out extensive checks and assessments prior to making any matches. However, as a matter of good practice we include this guidance in the handbook. If this causes you any concern, please speak to Project Staff.

## **Fire**

Please familiarise yourself with the layout of the home you are visiting and know where the exits are. If there is a fire, leave the home quickly and calmly and phone emergency services when you are safely outside.

If the person you are befriending requires assistance from their home, there is no obligation for you to provide this if you are unable or do not feel safe doing so. Leave the home as quickly as possible and phone emergency services, alerting them that someone is still in the building.

## **During your visit (if going on an outing)**

When going on an outing with the person you befriend (to a café, shopping centre or another activity), please ensure you have a charged mobile phone with you in case of emergencies or you need to get in touch with project staff.

## **Person you are matched with requiring assistance to vehicle or on public transport**

Prior to you being matched, an assessment of the person will be undertaken. Details gathered with regards to their mobility and if they can safely leave their home to go on an outing. This information will be shared with you. If the person you are matched with can leave their home to go on an outing but requires assistance to get from their home to your car or on public transport, this will be discussed with you prior to matching. If you are happy to provide this kind of support, we will ask that you undertake Moving and Positioning training if you do not already have recent (within 3 years) certification for this.

Moving and Positioning Training is provided through a third party and can be completed online. If you require this, Project Staff will send you a link to the





training; please keep the invoice you will be sent so we can reimburse you. From time to time we will also run face to face Moving and Positioning training using an external trainer so if this is your preference you can choose to undertake this. However you will not be able to provide any assistance support to the person you befriend without taking the training first.

### **Going on a walk with the person you are matched with**

You and the person you befriend may decide to go for a walk together if their mobility is good. If you decide to do this, please take sensible precautions when out walking and look out for any hazards that could cause a slip, trip or fall to you or the person you are matched with. Again, if the person requires any assistance during a walk, we ask that you first undertake Moving and Positioning training as described above before undertaking this activity.



### **What to do if...**

During your time as a volunteer befriender, you might find you come across some of the situations described below. While this is not an extensive list, it has been created based on experience to give you information on what to do in these scenarios. If you are not sure, it is always best to get in touch with project staff.

#### ***The person I befriend doesn't answer the phone when it's my usual day and time to phone them (for telephone befrienders).***

Firstly, don't panic. It might be that they haven't been able to get to the phone on time or they are maybe in another room of their home. Wait for 5-10 minutes and try them again. If you are still unable to contact them, get in touch with project staff. They will be able to get in touch with their emergency contact to determine if everything is OK and report back to you.

#### ***The person I befriend isn't answering their door when I am due to visit.***

Again, don't panic. It might be that they haven't heard the door, are perhaps on the phone or out in their back garden. If there's any windows, have a look and see if you can see any signs of them. If it seems as though no one is home, there will usually be a good reason, such as an appointment. We do always ask beneficiaries to let us know if they need to cancel a visit but sometimes this doesn't happen. Get in touch with project staff who will contact their emergency contact and then report back to you.

#### ***The person I befriend becomes unwell when I am phoning them or visiting them.***

If, when you are visiting or phoning the person and they say they are not feeling well, this might be usual for them due to physical or mental health conditions. If you have no concerns, cut the phone call or visit short and let them know you will see or phone them again the following week. Let project staff know that this is what you have done. If you have any concerns about their health at all but it



is not an emergency, phone the project staff who can contact their emergency contact or GP if necessary.

If the person becomes unwell during the call or visit and you believe they require medical assistance or ask for medical assistance, call the emergency services straight away and stay with the person until help arrives.

***The person I'm befriending has a fall while I am visiting.***

Sadly, falls can be quite common in older adults if they have a loss of strength and balance. If the person falls while you are visiting, your instinct might be to try and help them up. Don't do this as you don't know if they have injured themselves and helping them up could potentially do more harm. Some older adults will have the community alarm system installed and will wear a red pendant on either their wrist or neck. If the person you are befriending has this, ask them to press the button. If they are unable to do so, you can press it and it will alert the falls team via a device connected to their phone system. You or the person you are befriending can speak to them to let them know what's happened and they will send a team out to help. They are trained in moving and handling and can also ascertain if the person requires any further medical treatment.

If the person you befriend doesn't have this system and they are unable to get up themselves without help, call the emergency services who will respond to help and can also determine if any other medical treatment is required.

Remember if a situation occurs while you are phoning or visiting the person you befriend and you're not sure what to do, get in touch with project staff who will be happy to help!