



Befriending Service

Case Studies

mind in Harrogate District



Mind in Harrogate District offers a service for people across the whole district - Harrogate, Knaresborough, Boroughbridge, Nidderdale, Ripon and Masham. The service is for anyone who may feel:

- Isolated, lonely, low in mood, anxious
- in need of human companionship

We recruit and match volunteer befrienders with people who would benefit from community based support and in developing social relationships. Human companionship is important for maintaining positive mental health so if you need a little support, our Befriending Service could be for you.

This service offers the opportunity to meet with a volunteer befriender on a regular basis (typically one hour a week) for walks, a café visit, a shopping trip or other community based activity.

The first session is a supervised meet and greet to ensure that both parties are comfortable with one another. From then on regular one to one visits are scheduled.

If wish to access the service, volunteer as a befriender with is and you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact us by phone on 01423 503335 or email befriending@mindinharrogate.org.uk our Befriending Co-ordinator can meet you locally to discuss further.

98% of people accessing the service have rated it as Good or Very Good.

This document provides case studies produced from the feedback received from people accessing the service and also our Volunteer Befrienders. Read what they get from befriending below.



I have found a really good friend!

A lady in her 70's with a history of mental illness living alone who felt that her family did not understand her condition. Whilst doing some voluntary work part time she was looking for companionship to occupy her time at particular times of the week.



She has met with her befriender for 12 months, they meet once a week for one hour for a coffee and a chat. Her feedback on the scheme is as follows;

'I wasn't so sure at first but now I have found a really good friend it is excellent. If everyone gets a befriender as good as I have they should be very pleased. It has been excellent for me, I have found a really good friend!'

The volunteer befrienders feedback is as follows;

'Befriending for me, gives me something to do that's for me, that's nothing to do with my children and my caring role I have with them. I do look forward to meeting with her each week and hearing what she's been up to. When she's well she has a wonderful sense of humour! We often spend two hours together because we just chatting and time just flies by!'

'Befriending is such a worthwhile and fulfilling thing to do. Sometimes, people with mental health problems just need a friend. A friend who won't judge them, a friend who won't criticise them, a friend who is completely impartial in every way, a friend who will just listen when they need it the most. For anyone who enjoys a cup of tea, slice of cake, and a good chat, befriending will be for them!'

It has given me that gentle nudge forward.

A male in his 30's who has suffered with anxiety, post traumatic stress and recently diagnosed with autism.



For the last six months, he meets with a male befriender on a weekly basis and they go for a walk and a chat. His feedback on the scheme is as follows;

‘Meeting with the befriending coordinator and the befriender for the introductory meeting I was very nervous but they were both so kind, understanding and helped me feel at ease. The service is the best mental health support I have found over the last year. Thank you, It has been very beneficial meeting someone similar with shared interests. It has given me that gentle push forward’.

The volunteer befrienders feedback is as follows;

‘Participating with Mind has bought me huge personal meaning and a wonderful range of new friends. I truly recommend people to get involved and become a part of this wonderful organisation.’

Extremely happy with the service, it's an important part of my week!

A female in her 50's living alone who has struggled to attend groups and requires support to build her self-confidence.

For 12 months she has met her befriender for a coffee and a chat. Her feedback on the scheme is as follows;

'I have benefited tremendously; I have an excellent relationship with my befriender. It's an important part of my week. My befriender listens to me and cares about what I say. I am very appreciative and very happy how things are going. It's so much better than I expected!'

The feedback from the volunteer is as follows;

'Just listen don't judge and take small steps at a time. Be yourself as they do need to trust you. The service can be a lifeline for people receiving the service. Mind in Harrogate provide excellent support and training for volunteers.'

The scheme helps me reduce my anxiety, a very important part of my week!



A male in his 70's living alone with mental and physical health issues.

For 12 months he has now met a female befriender for a coffee and a chat. His feedback is as follows;

‘This is a very important part of my week, I like being able to meet up with someone who can listen and we can chat in a normal environment (café). The scheme is really helping me get out and reduce my anxiety, be more confident and also helping me practically too’.

Through communication and dialogue the befriending co-ordinator and the volunteer have assisted in signposting the individual to other services to support him with work required within his home that he was not capable of undertaking alone as well as support to address his physical health issues with his GP.

The feedback from the volunteer is as follows;

‘I like meeting up and having interesting conversations with my befriender. I’m happy to be able to help someone and feel well supported in my befriending role.’

Clone her so she can help others!

A lady in her 60's living alone with depression and anxiety and some physical health challenges.



She has met her befriender for 15 months now for a coffee and a chat. Her feedback on the service is as follows;

'She is the one bright spark in my week! It gives me a reason to get out and allows me to offload when I need to, my mental health is improving. It is very helpful to have company and know that someone is interested in my life, listens and cares. We have some lovely chats and seem to have similar interests. I am grateful for meetups locally as I have been struggling with my mobility.'

The volunteer feedback is as follows;

'Meeting my new 'Friend ' has now become a normal part of my weekly routine . We've laughed and we've cried . We've moaned and we've groaned about everything from the state of the nation , to the rubbish on the TV . But at the end of our cuppa , we consult diaries and book a re-run for the next week.'

Better than I expected!

A female in her 50's with mental health issues who had relocated to the area during the pandemic and is overcoming alcohol addiction.



She has been meeting her befriender for six months. They meet on a weekly basis to walk and talk or go for a coffee and a chat. They meet early in the week so that the individual can share their plans for the week ahead and use the befriender for peer support to stick to the plan. Her feedback on the scheme is as follows;

'I enjoy our meetups. She is easy to talk to and a great person to be with. It is far better than I expected!'

The feedback from the volunteer is as follows;

'For me it has been wonderful to develop a Befriending relationship that is based on mutual respect, trust and openness. It is a very important part of my week that I always value.'

Improving confidence and more independent

A female in her 70's who is a full time carer, and suffers with anxiety.



She has met with her befriender for 12 months and they meet for a coffee and a chat. Initially she didn't have the confidence to have other support for her husband but to reduce the anxiety she had of being away from the home she now plans meetups around a visit from a carer resource support worker. Her feedback on the scheme is as follows;

'It has been a great benefit, It gets me out on my own in a social situation and makes me feel more independent and normal. I really enjoy it and it has improved my confidence. It gives me a break from caring for my husband'.

Feedback from the Volunteer Befriender has been as follows;

'I was new to befriending with MIND and was initially unsure what to expect even though everything had been explained to me. I was pleased with how well I'd been matched with my befriender and within a couple of weeks we had built up a rapport, and I felt she could open up to me about what was going on in her life. I have had the pleasure of observing her confidence increase whilst visiting various cafes over this past year. After our meetings I have benefited from telephone support from my supervisor who was there to listen and guide.'

Nice to have something to look forward to!

A female in her 30's who has anxiety, mood disorder and is now agoraphobic and cannot leave the house alone.



She has met with her befriender for 9 months and they meet to go for a walk and a coffee.

'It gets me out of the house, it is nice to have something to look forward to! I am very happy with how it is all going.'

The volunteer befrienders feedback is as follows;

'It took a while for us to get to know each other, but over time we have developed a trusting relationship that allows us to talk about all sorts including family and share our interests. I was aware that my befriender would benefit from having something creative to do and she took up crochet again and she is now producing a blanket. Her daughter has requested she make a bag for her and together they have looked at different styles and accessories. This is really lovely to hear and is so positive. We talked about the benefits of doing something creative and how useful YouTube is! This is a good first step in to building confidence and self-belief. I always enjoy our sessions and I feel that I benefit too.'

It's felt safe supportive and helped my confidence grow.

A female in her 30's who has struggled with anxiety and other mental health issues.



She has met her befriender for 12 months for a coffee and they are now going for walks.

'I just really like seeing her and like that she seems to enjoy seeing me. It's just so nice to have someone to talk to about all sorts of things. I really like how it has gone, it's felt safe supportive and helped my confidence grow.'

The volunteer befriender feedback is as follows;

'I think we have been matched perfectly and I really look forward to our meet ups each week.'

I feel I can talk about how I feel and trust him 100%

A male in his 60's who struggles with depression and low mood.



He has met his befriender for over 18 months.

'It helps me when I am struggling with my mental health, I feel like I can talk about how I feel and trust him 100%, he never judges me, I feel comfortable with him. You all do a great job and I feel that I can talk to any of you when I am not in a good place.'

The volunteer befrienders feedback is as follows;

"It's very easy to underestimate the value of having someone who will just listen when you need it, and it's been a tremendous privilege to get to know him, and to walk with him on his mental health journey."

I had no idea how important this service would end up being for me!

A male in his 50's with caring responsibilities for parents and mental health challenges.



He has met with his befriender for over 12 months and they meet to go for a walk and a chat on a weekly basis. His feedback on the service is as follows;

‘Yes the befriending service has helped me enormously. It’s a huge benefit, once a week I feel unjudged, almost normal and even liked! It has exceeded my expectations, I had no idea how important this service would end up being to me! Thank you’.

The volunteer’s feedback is as follows;

‘I look forward to my befriending sessions. Knowing and hoping you could be making a positive difference to someone's life is uplifting. Building and sustaining a relationship between a befriender and befriended can be challenging. However when you form a connection and see the progress that can follow it is immensely rewarding.’

Befriending experience been very beneficial!

A male in his 50's who suffered depression and anxiety and had attended day services at Mind.



The individual did not feel that groups were working for them and requested a befriender. They met the befriender weekly for four months for a coffee and a chat and then got themselves to a point where they could undertake a voluntary role and did not need to access the service for the support.

There feedback on the service was as follows;

‘The befriending experience has been very beneficial for me as it has given me an opportunity to do something normal and away from a more formal mental health setting. It was far better than I was expecting. My befriender is a great guy and even though he has a very busy home and work life he still makes time to meet me. It really means a lot to me’.