



Befriending Coordinator: Hayley Brown

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2.Fife Voluntary Action and Kingdom Companions

- Fife Voluntary Action (FVA) is the third sector interface for the Fife Council area. We are an independent charity that receives funding from key public sector agencies to ensure the third sector is robust, resilient and delivers high quality services for the people of Fife.
- We support, develop and represent community groups, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and volunteering. We have around 45 staff members covering these activities across Fife, operating from our offices in Glenrothes, Cupar, Leven, Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy. We provide a range of support to third sector organisations and have expertise in a wide range of skills and topics including governance, funding, legislation, policy, volunteering, managing people, planning and problem solving - almost all support we offer is provided at no cost.
- Kingdom Companions is a befriending service which has been run by Fife Voluntary Action for over 10 years. This short-term service aims to assist vulnerable, perhaps socially isolated or lonely adults who need support to achieve a goal for themselves. This might be getting back into the community, travelling independently, or becoming involved in volunteering themselves.
- Kingdom Companions is a short-term befriending service, lasting between 4-6 months. Prior to a befriending match commencing the Befriending Coordinator and the befriender will identify and agree a goal which is deemed to be achievable within this time period.
- Many of our befriending volunteers ask to be re-matched with another befriender when their first befriending match comes to an end.

3.The Community Befriender Volunteer Role

- We rely on the generosity of volunteer befrienders who give their time, usually 2-3 hours a week, to support a befriender for a maximum of 4-6 months to hopefully achieve their goal.
- As a volunteer befriender you can help make a huge difference to the well-being of a local person and help them to achieve a personal goal through short-term befriending. Examples of previous goals include revisiting an old hobby or building confidence to be able to travel independently again.
- Befrienders provide regular voluntary support at an agreed location, day, time and duration.
- Befriending with Kingdom Companions can take place anywhere in the community. Some befriending matches choose to meet at a different café each week, others embark on a tour of local community groups until they find a suitable group for the befriender whilst others have been known to put on their walking boots and enjoy weekly walks together. The setting of the befriending is up to you and your befriender and is often dependent on the befriender's goal as well as the capabilities of both parties.
- Volunteer befrienders work to build a trusting and supportive relationship with the befriender. After getting to know each other during the first few sessions, a volunteer can begin to focus on the befriender's challenges and try to identify ways they can help to encourage and support the befriender. Through building a trusting, non-judgemental relationship a volunteer can support the befriender to progress and often to achieve their goal – which is very rewarding for both the volunteer and the befriender.

4.What You Can Expect from Us

- **Training** – New volunteers are required to complete mandatory training and induction sessions. This will cover points such as confidentiality, boundaries, communication, and safeguarding.
- **Development Opportunities** - We will invite you to other relevant training which you are welcome to enrol in and attend.
- **On-Going Support** – The Befriending Coordinator's role is to oversee Kingdom Companions and provide any help and support during the befriending process. The coordinator is available within office hours Monday-Thursday to provide help and support to both the volunteer befriender and befriender whenever necessary either by phone, email or a face-to-face meeting. The manager of Kingdom Companions is available Monday – Friday if you are unable to contact the coordinator.
- **Rewarding Experience** – In addition to the positive impact befriending has on the befriender, we aim for the experience to be fulfilling for our volunteers.
- **An Opportunity to Become Part of Our Befriending Community**- Throughout the year there are Befriending Volunteer Sessions arranged to catch up and share experiences including a Befriending Week Celebration in November.
- **Networking** – All FVA volunteers are invited along to three 'Coffee and Cake' events a year, which is an opportunity to meet volunteers from other FVA Projects as well as catching up with other befriending volunteers. You will also be invited to FVA's Volunteer Christmas Lunch.

5. What You Can Expect from Us Continued

- **Expenses** – Volunteers can claim for reasonable out of pocket expenses for their volunteering, e.g. the cost of your coffee while meeting your befriender in the community or the cost of your return journey on public transport to your befriending session. Car journeys are reimbursed at a rate of 45p per mile. Expenses are normally paid via BACs transfer on a monthly basis upon receipt of your claim form and receipts.
- **Approachable** – We are constantly reviewing our processes to make Kingdom Companions the best we possibly can. The Befriending Coordinator welcomes all suggestions and feedback.


6. Our Expectations from Our Volunteers

- **Role**- Volunteers are expected to perform the role to the best of their ability and in accordance with FVA's policies.
- **Training** - Volunteers are required to complete the mandatory training and induction sessions. This will cover issues such as confidentiality, boundaries, communication, and safeguarding.
- **Support and Development** – Volunteers are expected to participate in Review and Reflection sessions every 3 months.
- **Confidentiality** – Volunteers will not share any information about the befriender or what is discussed, unless they believe that the befriender or they or others are at risk of harm.
- **Personal Safety App**- Volunteers are required to use the Safeguarding App, demonstrated during training, during every befriending session.
- **Reporting Issues** – If you have any concerns about your befriender or regarding the match, please urgently contact the Befriending Coordinator by phoning the phone numbers on the front cover.
- **Rescheduling Sessions**– We understand from time to time, volunteers may need to reschedule a session due to other commitments- please contact us as soon as possible if rescheduling is required.
- **Maintaining Contact** – FVA require all volunteers, as well as our befrienders, to maintain contact with the Befriending Coordinator- responding either by email/phone in a timely manner.
- **Boundaries** – We suggest that neither party discuss religion, politics, or controversial issues which may inadvertently cause offence. There should be no exchange of gifts or money, phone number/social media/email addresses. No one else should be present during a befriending session and neither party should be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

7. Benefits of Befriending

Befriending Support can:

- ✓ Lower rates of depression
 - ✓ Improve social skills
 - ✓ Reduce social isolation
 - ✓ Improve self- management
 - ✓ Improve self-esteem and confidence
 - ✓ Reduce vulnerability
 - ✓ Build a sense of purpose
- Providing short-term befriending focused on a specific goal, can give the befriender the confidence to be more independent and reengage with their community. Below is a quote from one of our recent befrienders:



'I could never have imagined the positive impact that [my volunteer] has had on my quality of life. Through her gentle encouragement she demonstrated to me that I am in fact capable of going out alone and meeting people. I have even had the confidence to join an art group. I thoroughly enjoyed our sessions and I now see [my volunteer] as my friend- I am very grateful.'

8. Handy Reminders

- **Check your phone** - Before leaving the house for your befriending session, please check your phone/emails for messages to ensure that there has not been a last-minute request to postpone. The coordinator will be in touch as soon as advised of a requirement to rearrange.
- **Safeguarding App** – Ensure you are using the app for the duration of all sessions.
- **Welfare Concerns** – Raise any welfare concerns to the Befriending Coordinator as soon as possible after a session.
- **Remember Key Boundaries:**
 - No one else should be present for the session.
 - We suggest that conversations regarding religion, politics or controversial topics are avoided so as not to inadvertently cause offence.
 - No exchange of gifts or personal phone numbers/email.
 - You cannot drive your befriender anywhere- public transport must be used.
- **Maintain Contact**– Please remember that the coordinator is here to help with any questions/concerns you have. Suggestions on how to improve our service are also very welcome.
- **Enjoy Yourself!**- Befriending should be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience.

[If you ever feel uncomfortable during a session, make an excuse to end the session and contact the Befriending Coordinator.](#)