

Q & A: Kingdom Companions

What is Kingdom Companions?

Kingdom Companions is a short-term, goal specific befriending service for people who live in Fife, aged 16 or over. The service matches a client with a Volunteer Companion who, together, work towards achieving a personal goal for the client. Our project is fully insured, all staff and volunteers are trained and we have robust risk management processes in place to ensure a safe, beneficial experience for clients and volunteers.

What is befriending?

At different times in our lives, we all need extra help and support. If we don't have friends or family who can step in, we can end up feeling lonely and perhaps become isolated in our community or from social contacts. Befrienders help someone to cope with this by taking time to listen to how they are feeling and supporting them. Befriending is not the same as advocacy, counselling or a replacement for a statutory service.

The type of befriending we promote and support is specifically time-bound for the achievement of something meaningful to the client - a personal goal.

What do you mean by 'personal goal'?

We define a personal goal as something tangible that a client wants to achieve. Lack of confidence, motivation or knowledge may prevent this goal being achieved independently. In order for the match to be a success and for the client to move forward, personal goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and able to be achieved during the short-term period of the match.

What do you mean by short-term?

We have a 16 week maximum period for any befriender match during which the Volunteer Companion will support the client to achieve their personal goal.

Who can get a Volunteer Companion?

Kingdom Companions is currently available to adults within Fife who require short-term support and encouragement and to achieve a personal goal.

Who can become a Volunteer Companion?

Anybody living or working in Fife who is 15 or older and successfully undertakes our companion training can become a Volunteer Companion.

Who can make a referral for a Volunteer Companion?

We accept referrals from any organisation, the person who is seeking the companion or any friend or relative.

How can I make a referral?

Referrals are made via our referral form, these can be accessed on our website www.fifevoluntaryaction.org.uk/kingdomcompanions and can be returned by e-mail, post or in person. You can have a form posted out by calling our Freephone number: **0800 389 6046**.



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What happens after a referral is made?

Once the referral is received, we will aim to review the information within six working days. We may contact the person making the referral to clarify anything we are unsure of. Normally, we will then arrange to visit the client to further explain the short-term nature of Kingdom Companions and collectively decide whether Kingdom Companions is best suited to support the needs of the client. We aim to meet with the client within 20 working days of the referral being made.

What happens if the referral is not appropriate?

If, after assessing the referral form and/or visiting the client, it is felt that short-term befriending is not appropriate we will be happy to provide information on other befriending services that may be more suited. We will provide this information to the referrer and the client.

How long can my client expect to wait for a match?

It is difficult to identify how long someone referred will have to wait for a match, some may wait only a matter of weeks, whilst some may wait for a few months. The matching process requires careful consideration of the suitability of two people. We take into account the client's needs, the identified personal goal, the volunteer's capability as well as profiles and preferences. Our experience tells us that getting the match right is the very best of achieving a good outcome for the client and a rewarding experience for the volunteer too.

What can cause delays in matching?

We don't want to delay matching unnecessarily. We want clients and volunteers to have a great experience, and long waits for clients or volunteers are things we try to avoid where we reasonably can.

We take into account things like location within Fife, trying to match people who live in the same locality is better but not always possible. We have more volunteers registered in some parts of Fife than others, but as an organisation we work with more than 100 potential volunteers every month, some of whom will want to become a volunteer companion. We also need to match based on time availability, skills, experience, preferences of the volunteer, but also of the client.

What if I have not heard anything for a while?

We will endeavour to keep referrers up to date with the matching process but please feel free to contact us, should you require an update. We will pass on our contact details to the client during our assessment visit in case they have any questions and aim to update individual clients every six weeks.

What if I'm not happy with the service?

We have very high satisfaction rates amongst our clients and volunteers but we recognise that sometimes things don't go according to plan. If we've not provided the service you expected then we really would welcome hearing from you so that we can understand the situation and put it right, or reduce the likelihood of a future client or volunteer having a negative experience. You can complain using our Complaints Policy and Procedure which is on our website at www.fifevoluntaryaction.org.uk/complaints or request a copy be sent to you by calling us on Freephone **0800 389 6046**.

