

Befriending Statistics Report



**Befriending
Week**

1st - 7th
November

September 2024



**Befriending
Networks**

Introduction

We are the network for befriending organisations. Established as a charity in 1994, we have thirty years of experience in supporting and connecting befriending services.

Our members form the largest network of befriending services in the world.

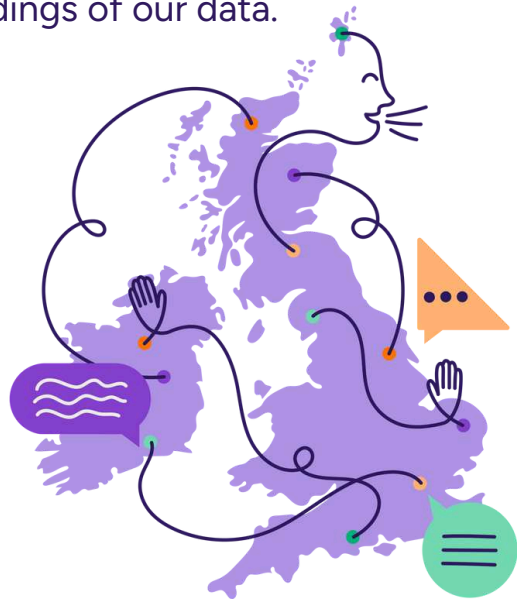
We provide access to sector-specific training, events, resources, and awards which support quality in befriending. Each year we coordinate Befriending Week from the 1st – 7th November.

Our vision is of a society where quality befriending support is available to everyone who needs it, and the importance of meaningful connection is recognised.

Annually our members self-report data related to their befriending services which informs this Befriending Statistics Report which we publish ahead of Befriending Week.

This report sets out the methodology we utilise for collecting and analysing befriending statistics for 2024, and the findings of our data.

Befriending Networks September 2024



Methodology

Membership data is collected using the Befriending Network website. 100% of our members are offered the opportunity to provide data.

In 2024, 75% of our membership provided data, an increase from 67% in 2023. Data (or partial data) was provided by 267 of a possible 354 organisations.

The data requested includes responses to the following questions:

- How many 1:1 face-to-face befriending matches have you supported?
- How many people have you supported through group befriending?
- How many people have you supported through telephone befriending?
- How many active volunteers have you used?
- How many hours of befriending have been delivered by your volunteers?

We check the data for any zero responses, negative values, or any outlying data. We are unable to check the validity of the data provided by our membership. We collate the data available to us and produce a data set for the number of people/hours based on actual responses. From this data, we then calculate both the average and median. We then use this average or median data to scale this up to the size of our overall membership and to infer an estimated size of the befriending sector that is supported by Befriending Networks in 2024.

Interpretation

- Where a statistic reads as “a minimum” this is based on actual figures provided.
- Where a statistic reads as “an estimate” this is an inference using average data.
- Average means the total count of data provided divided by 267 (the number of organisations who provided data).
- Median means the mid-point within the range of responses given by the 267 organisations.



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www.befriending.co.uk

Befriending Networks Ltd is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in Scotland No. 195896. Charity No. SC023610 regulated by OSCR.

Limitations of the data

The data we collect and analyse has several limitations which impact its validity and reliability. It is for these reasons that in 2025 we will use a new methodology for befriending statistics.

- Data is self-reported by members with no guidance as to definitions of what is being asked.
- Data is collected at membership application or renewal, services which are new / or in their first year of operating when they join our network typically provide zero values as their data is not yet known.
- The format of questions related to numbers of people supported may result in some individuals being double or triple counted if they receive multiple befriending inputs e.g. telephone, face-to-face, and group.
- The wording of questions does not give a time period and is therefore open to interpretation that it is the most recent/annual data being requested.
- Data provided by organisations may be historic if they use reflective tools such as annual reports to complete their data e.g. in 2024 we are collating data provided by our membership based on 2023 activity.

Our new approach will be a census survey of active members in February, aligned with our membership survey. It will include improved questions and additional questions regarding perceptions of trends and challenges in the sector.

Variance of Organisations

As a membership organisation there is considerable diversity and variance of the size and scale of befriending services. There are notable changes in the data we are reporting in 2024 compared to 2023 which is largely attributed to the inclusion of data from a few very large befriending services who have provided data for the first time.

When data is sorted by the “greatest number of volunteers” 10 organisations account for 47% of all volunteers in our membership (10,442 volunteers), of which 6618 are telephone befriending volunteers.

When data is sorted by the “least number of volunteers”, 10 organisations account for just 18 volunteers.

When we focus data on telephone befriending, 10 organisations provide support to 71% of all people receiving befriending calls.



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Quick Statistics

354

members

882,718

minimum number of
befriending hours

21,856

minimum number of
befriending
volunteers

43

average number
of hours
volunteered

64,580

minimum number of
people supported by
befriending

26

median number of
befriending
volunteers per
member



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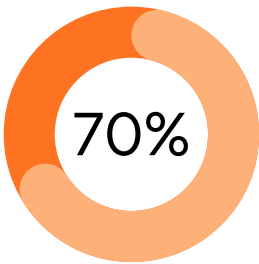
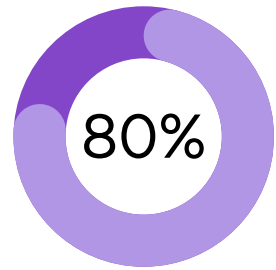
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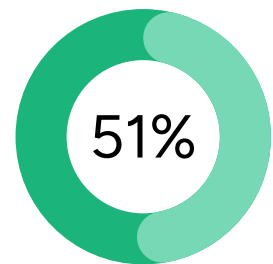
Befriending Type

80% of our members provided data related to the provision of **1:1 face-to-face** befriending. At least **23,357** people received face-to-face befriending.



70% of our members provided data related to the provision of **telephone befriending**. At least **26,484** people received telephone befriending.

51% of our members provided data related to the provision of **group befriending**. At least **15,009** people received group befriending.



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Befriending Statistics

STATISTIC	2024	2023	2022
Number of Members	354	383	367
Number of Members Providing Data	267 (75%)	258 (67%)	255 (69%)
Minimum Number of People Supported by Befriending	64,850	37,313	45,305
Estimated Number of People Supported by Befriending	85,622	55,391	65,204
Minimum Number of Befriending Volunteers	21,865	13,460	16,443
Estimated Number of Befriending Volunteers	29,736	19,981	23,665
Minimum Number of Befriending Hours	882,718	679,683	756,835
Estimated Number of Befriending Hours	1,329,624	1,008,987	1,089,249
Average Number of Volunteers (per organisation)	84	52	64
Economic Value	£18.96million	£16.35million	N/A



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Economic Value of Befriending Volunteers

Befriending, in the main is provided by volunteers who are supported and coordinated by experienced staff working within befriending organisations.

We estimate that the economic value of befriending volunteers is **£18.96million**.

How do we calculate this figure?

Step 1: Actual Number of Volunteer Hours = 882,718 hours

Step 2: Estimated Number of Volunteer Hours (Actual / 267 x 354) = 1,170,345

Step 3: Estimated Hours x ASHE Median Pay £16.20 = £18,959,592



“ We know that befriending changes lives and strengthens communities. We hear of life-changing stories of human connection, made possible by dedicated volunteers, compassionate coordinators, and resilient befriending services. Befriending benefits the health and wellbeing of individuals, increases social connection, and adds value to people’s lives.”

– SUSAN HUNTER, CEO



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