



Journey Across Befriending

YOUR TRAVEL GUIDE



Join the world's largest network of befriending projects



Get access to exclusive resources, events, discounts and more **from as little as £75 a year.**

SCHEDULE A CHAT WITH US



Are you making the most of membership?

Learn how to take advantage of all your membership benefits!

Join our team online for a Making the Most of Membership information session.



UPCOMING SESSIONS



Welcome to your Journey Across Befriending!

This publication is your route map to the services and support that Befriending Networks can offer your befriending project.

Just as travellers rely on maps and guides to navigate through the unfamiliar, at Befriending Networks, informed by 30 years of experience, we can assist you with access to expert training, engaging networking, tailored support for your enquiries, and access to our Quality in Befriending Excellence Award.

Accessing our service equips you with the tools, knowledge, and connections necessary for your befriending journey. Training provides the compass, guiding you through vital skills, good practice and topical training. Networking creates bridges between organisations, fostering collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Whilst membership support can provide an opportunity to check your direction before you continue on your way.

Whether you are embarking on a new journey, a change of direction, or are reflecting on the journey past, please remember that no befriending project is alone. Befriending Networks is your network, and we will be alongside you every step of the way.

Please keep connected and we look forward to seeing you at an event soon.

— Susan and the team at
Befriending Networks



Visit befriending.co.uk/roadshow2025 for links to the resources and training found in this guide (and much more!)



This symbol indicates resources exclusive to members of Befriending Networks.

Contents

-  Design and development
-  Knowing your community
-  Your Befriending Roadmap
-  Volunteers
-  Making a difference
-  Pearls of Wisdom

Design and development

Starting up or evolving a befriending project



Launching a new project or changing an established one can feel like a daunting prospect. Use these tips and resources to make sure you get on the right path and ensure the process is effective and efficient.

TOP TIPS



1

Embrace co-design

Engage with stakeholders when developing your project. By co-design we bring together lived and professional experience and expertise, a process which ensures that the community is the focus.

2

Take a step back and reflect

Can you identify the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How of your befriending service? Is your message clear? Is there an identified need for change?

3

Consider your capacity

Are design or development ideas a priority or a want? Write out your actions and rank them from top priority to hopeful wants.

Next steps



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Starting a Befriending Service

We recommend reviewing the whole guide for anyone in the development stage.



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE



Running a Befriending Service

Find tips on designing your service to fit capacity on pages 9 - 10.



TOPICAL TRAINING

Collaboration and Co-Design

Short course supporting community development work.



TOPICAL TRAINING

Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting Impact

Develop your project with objectives and reporting in mind.



VITAL SKILLS

Managing Waiting Lists and Organisational Capacity

Intensive course to review protocol for managing your case load and capacity.

3



Access Roadshow resources at
befriending.co.uk/roadshow2025

Knowing your community

Referrals, eligibility and responding to need



Befriending works best when you're able to reach the people your project is designed to serve. Protect your project's capacity by making it clear who can use your service and understanding what's needed in your community.

TOP TIPS



1

Use clear messaging

Make eligibility explicit. Ensure language is clear and mirrored across all marketing, social media, website and documentation to minimise confusion.

2

Review need

Conduct your own evaluation of need, e.g. through focus groups or surveys. Use data from existing sources such as indices of deprivation and other national or local data sets.

3

Make your project inclusive

Identify who is in your community and take action to meet their needs. Consider representation in language and images, ensure your project is welcoming.

Next steps



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE **Running a Befriending Service**

Refer to pages 41 - 43 to learn how to refine your referral process and eligibility criteria.



RESEARCH **Join our mailing list**

We share the latest research relevant to the befriending sector. Join at befriending.co.uk/subscribe



TOPICAL TRAINING **Collaboration and Co-Design**

Short course supporting community development work.



VITAL SKILLS **Managing Waiting Lists and Organisational Capacity**

Intensive course to review protocol for managing your case load and capacity.



TOPICAL TRAINING **Reducing Inappropriate Referrals**

Short course identifying common barriers and problem-solving methods for referral management.

Your Befriending Roadmap

We're here to help you navigate every aspect of running a befriending project.



Start your journey today at [befriending.co.uk](https://www.befriending.co.uk)

KEY

- Highlights
- Training
- Resources
- Networking
- Info sessions
- Directory
- Quality Award
- 1:1 Support
- Bespoke
- Campaigns
- Discounts

New to befriending?
START HERE

Connect at networking events

Learn the basics at training

- Topical Training
- Running a Befriending Service

Get in touch to chat about how we can help you



Explore free resources

- Funding toolkit for the sector
- Good Practice Guide: Starting a Befriending Service

Join a Making the Most of Membership session

Become a member of Befriending Networks

Discounts on all training, bespoke and consultancy



List your project in our directory



Attend research sessions and masterclasses



Boost your project's capacity and impact

- Management and Leadership in Befriending Projects
- Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting Impact
- Train the Trainer

Access exclusive resources

- Befriender Training Toolkit
- Templates and example policies

Discover your network in our directory

Learn more about being a member

- Introduction to Befriending Networks

Take your skills to the next level

- Vital Skills for Staff

Get bespoke materials and training

Showcase your impact at Befriending Week

Attend or co-host a networking event



Get your Quality in Befriending or Excellence Award



Volunteers

Recruitment, retention and recognition



Volunteers are a key ingredient for befriending projects. Develop strategies to help you recruit and retain a brilliant befriending team. And remember to take time to celebrate them too!

TOP TIPS



1

Make communication easy

Always ensure there are two methods of communication available. For example, a telephone number and an email address. This will improve the accessibility of a volunteering role.

2

Build rapport

Sufficient volunteer training can assist you to build a relationship with your volunteer. Rapport can support retention, reduce risk, protect boundaries, support safeguarding and more.

3

Celebrate and recognise

Participate in Befriending Week (1st - 7th November), Volunteers' Week or other campaigns. Ensure you take time to recognise the effort and support of volunteers by saying thank you.

Next steps



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE **Starting a Befriending Service**

Access guidance on the first steps if you are a new project or idea.



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE **Running a Befriending Service**

Find advice for managing befrienders on pages 23 - 33 and ways to support and engage volunteers on pages 36 - 37.



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE **Being a Befriender**

Access our befriender handbook and share it with your volunteers.



TOPICAL TRAINING **Volunteer Retainment**

A short course which covers 7 principles of volunteer retention.



VITAL SKILLS **Volunteer Recruitment**

Intensive course reviewing methods and protocols in volunteer recruitment.



VITAL SKILLS **Support and Supervision**

Intensive course reviewing best practice for monitoring, reviewing and supporting befrienders.



Making a difference

Collecting feedback and sharing your impact



There are many ways to collect feedback and advocate for the work you are doing. Monitor growth and development, evaluate your service and promote the difference you are making.

TOP TIPS



1

Embed your objectives

Review the project's purpose. How can this be monitored and evaluated? Embed performance indicators in procedures, e.g. in matching process and support and supervision questions.

2

Offer multiple ways to engage

To increase likelihood of participation, ensure two methods for engagement are available, e.g. feedback form and telephone survey. This also supports inclusion and accessibility. Ask preferred communication at point of referral or recruitment.

3

Share and advocate

Share results. Embed data in recruitment materials. Take advantage of social media, newsletters, your website, AGM and more. Good news does not need to be reserved just for funders.

Next steps



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Starting a Befriending Service

Learn about communicating the impact of befriending on page 15.



GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Running a Befriending Service

Find tips on developing your monitoring and evaluation process on pages 16 - 20.



TOPICAL TRAINING

Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting Impact

A short course to learn how to report your outcomes and impact, embedding key performance indicators and objectives to succeed in your theory of change.



GOOD PRACTICE

Management and Leadership in Befriending Projects

Join our multi-day course to develop your leadership skills.



VITAL SKILLS

Support and Supervision

An intensive course to help you frame your questions and data collection in support sessions.

Pearls of Wisdom

To mark 30 years since Befriending Networks registered as a charity, we asked our members and supporters to share the biggest lessons they've learnt from their journey in befriending. Here are some of their Pearls of Wisdom...



30
YEARS

Starting out? Try to cover all the eventualities or as many as you can think of – but remember that there will always be something new!

— **Befriending and Mentoring Services Manager**

VOLUNTEER GLASGOW

Even the smallest amount of time given can make such an immense difference to the life of a lonely person. There is an instant sense of warmth, connection, purpose and joy, which can be so rare these days.

— **Operations Manager**

CARE AND SHARE COMPANIONSHIP

We are all in this together and everyone has a nugget of gold to help someone out. Very grateful to be part of the support network that Befriending Network offers us all.

— **Volunteer Coordinator**

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ask your stakeholders to provide feedback about how the befriending work your project does helps them to meet their strategic aims, and boosts the individual well-being of their clients.

— **Community Champions Manager**

VOLUNTARY ACTION SOUTH
LEICESTERSHIRE

Make sure you look after your volunteers and tell them what is expected of them right from the start. They are super stars in my eyes! Recruit quality over quantity and if the match does not work first time, do not be disheartened.

— **Volunteer Coordinator**

AGE UK NORTH YORKSHIRE
COAST AND MOORS

If you're new in post or starting a new service there's no need to feel daunted or overwhelmed. There's so many aspects of Befriending Networks services to help and support you. Join a networking session and you'll realise no question is too trivial and there's a wealth of experience within the staff and fellow members.

— **Former Development Officer**

BEFRIENDING NETWORKS



Access Roadshow resources at
befriending.co.uk/roadshow2025

Start your Quality Award journey

Get accredited with the only award in the UK specifically tailored for befriending services.

Contact us today to find out how you can get started.



FIND OUT
MORE



Deliver high-quality training with the Befriender Training Toolkit



Access a wide range of training resources for your volunteers.

Join a virtual 'how-to' introductory session, for free, to find out more.

EXPLORE THE
TOOLKIT





Join our mailing list for the latest news and updates from the sector




befriending.co.uk/subscribe



Befriending Networks Ltd is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in Scotland No. SC195896, Charity No. SC023610

5-7 Montgomery Street Lane, Edinburgh, EH7 5JT

✕ @befriendingnet

 Befriending Networks LTD

 @BefriendingNetworks

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2025

befriending.co.uk