

# **Service Capacity Policy v1**

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this Service Capacity Policy is to ensure that K&D Befriending delivers safe, high-quality, ethically managed support within the limits of available staff time and resources. By defining service capacity, the organisation is able to plan effectively, protect staff and volunteers, uphold safeguarding responsibilities, and maintain a consistent and professional service for clients.

This policy supports the following key areas of practice:

## **2. Safeguarding and Risk Management**

Befriending involves supporting individuals who may be vulnerable or at risk. If staff become overstretched, supervision, monitoring, and safeguarding procedures can become inconsistent.

A clear capacity policy ensures:

- Clients receive appropriate and timely oversight.
- Volunteers are supported and supervised effectively.
- Safeguarding concerns are recognised, recorded, and responded to promptly.

## **3. Quality and Consistency of Support**

Without clear limits on capacity, service quality may become diluted.

This policy helps ensure:

- Every client receives the level of support agreed.
- Volunteers receive appropriate supervision and regular check-ins.
- Staff have sufficient time to manage each match safely and sustainably.

## **4. Staff Workload and Wellbeing**

With a small staff team, excessive caseloads can lead to stress, burnout, and higher turnover.

A capacity framework helps to:

- Maintain manageable and fair caseloads.
- Prevent overwork and protect staff wellbeing.
- Ensure workloads are predictable and proportionate to available hours.

## **5. Fair and Transparent Decision-Making**

A structured capacity policy provides clarity on:

- When new referrals can be accepted.
- When the service needs to pause or close referrals.
- How capacity decisions are communicated

This supports professionalism, transparency, and trust with partners and the public.

## 6. Strategic Planning and Funding

A documented approach to capacity enables K&D Befriending to:

- Demonstrate the relationship between demand and staffing levels.
- Evidence the hours required for safe and effective delivery.
- Provide clear rationale for funding applications or additional staffing requests.
- Plan volunteer recruitment and intake more effectively.

## 7. Prioritisation and Equity

When referrals exceed available capacity, a clear framework ensures decisions that are:

- Fair
- Consistent
- Based on transparent criteria

Prioritisation may consider factors such as level of isolation, risk, urgency and specific matching requirements.

## 8. Service Sustainability

Setting realistic service capacity is essential to:

- Prevent overstretch
- Maintain reliability
- Protect organisational stability
- Ensure long-term delivery of befriending support

## 9. Service Capacity Calculation

### 9.1 Defined Variables

- Total staff: 3
- Staff hours per week: varies by role
- Time per volunteer: recruitment, onboarding, training, supervision, administration
- Time per client: registration, matching, monitoring, support
- Volunteer–client ratio: 1:1

### 9.2 Staff Tasks and Time Allocation

Estimated time requirements include:

- Recruitment and onboarding of each volunteer: 5 hours
- Ongoing volunteer supervision: 1 hour per month
- Client support for each match: 1 hour per month
- Administrative and reporting duties: 20% of total staff time

### 9.3 Capacity Formula

$$\text{Capacity} = \frac{\text{Available staff hours per month} - \text{Admin hours}}{\text{Hours per volunteer per month} + \text{Hours per client per month}}$$

Each volunteer/client match requires approximately 2 hours per month.

Deeside:

- Staff hours: 29 hrs/week × 4 = 116 hrs/month (DC 21 hrs, Admin 8 hrs)
- Admin time (20%): 23.2 hrs
- Hours available for delivery: 92.8 hrs
- Capacity: 92.8 ÷ 2 = 46.4 matches

Kincardine:

- Staff hours: 27 hrs/week × 4 = 108 hrs/month (SC 19 hrs, Admin 8 hrs)
- Admin time (20%): 21.6 hrs
- Hours available for delivery: 86.4 hrs
- Capacity: 86.4 ÷ 2 = 43.2 matches

### 9.4 Recruitment and Growth Periods

Volunteer recruitment requires approximately 5 hours per volunteer for onboarding. This should be factored into capacity during periods of growth. During periods of stability, ongoing supervision and client support form the basis of capacity planning.

### 9.5 Risk and Quality Adjustments

- A buffer of 10–15% should be reserved monthly for emergency situations or unplanned safeguarding concerns.
- Higher-risk clients may require increased time allocation and therefore reduce capacity accordingly.

## 10. Waiting List Management

K&D Befriending operates a waiting list that does not follow a “first come, first served” system. Matches depend on the availability of a suitable befriender for a specific client, with priority given to those with the highest needs.

### 10.1 Ongoing Review

- Clients on the waiting list must be reviewed at least every two months.
- Staff should confirm whether the client’s circumstances have changed and whether the need for a befriender remains.
- Client records should be updated as required.

Clients are informed at registration that they will receive periodic review and may request an update at any time.

## **10.2 Changes in Circumstances**

During review, it may become clear that a client:

- No longer requires support or does not wish to proceed with befriending
- Has moved into full-time care
- Has died without the service being informed

In such cases, the client will be removed from the list.

## **10.3 Open and Closed Waiting List**

To maintain reasonable waiting times:

- The waiting list may be closed to new referrals when approximately 10 clients are awaiting registration.
- The list may be reopened when:
  - the number reduces to 4–5 clients, or
  - there are no compatible matches available.
- Opening and closing of the waiting list is communicated to all professional referrers, e.g. care management team, GP surgeries etc

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

- Service capacity is reviewed annually at the Annual Planning Meeting.
- Monthly statistics and demand pressures are reviewed at each Management Committee Meeting.
- This policy should be reviewed every 12 months, or sooner if significant operational changes occur.

## Service capacity Policy – record of updates

Date of review	Decision
Version 1	Adopted 26 Jan 2026

SAMPLE