

Older People's Service Providers Network – Befriending Subgroup

Notes from meeting held Tuesday 13th March

1. VOLUNTEERS

Some services have variable demand levels at different times - so may have 'spare' volunteers temporarily, waiting for placement.

Variety of recruitment - university fairs; volunteering websites; local posters etc; churches/faith organisations; people aiming to work in social care, physiotherapy etc.

Supervision - professional supervision, recognising need for emotional support; regular management support to make sure 'things going well'. Hard to get volunteers to take opportunity. Some will if it also involves meeting other vols.

Recording sessions vital - written logs; email; phone. Date and time of session essential to record.

Sharing volunteers - would need careful supervision to ensure continuity of highest standards/no inadvertent sharing of bad practice.

2. TRAINING

Standardise training: major areas needed are a) Safeguarding; b) Dementia. - understanding and support; c) Self care

Group training has the advantages of enabling discussion, especially through scenarios and questioning.

Sharing training - inviting volunteers from a wider network to participate together. The possibility of a local Befriending Certificate.

Befriending Networks - a national organisation with resources on website and increased resources for members (£75.00pa minimum membership).

<https://www.befriending.co.uk/membership.php> . They run training events, including bespoke, and also run online courses for befrienders

<https://www.befriending.co.uk/online-volunteer-training.php#booknow>

EPAP - European Patient Ambassador Programme - gives free online training to become a patient representative:

[http://www.europeanlung.org/en/projects-and-research/projects/european-patient-ambassador-programme-\(epap\)/home](http://www.europeanlung.org/en/projects-and-research/projects/european-patient-ambassador-programme-(epap)/home)

3. CARE and ADVOCACY

Befriender volunteers are becoming 'front-line support'- paid carers often have so little time, where they are involved at all.

Balance between recognising the importance of basic contact through befriending, recognising that befrienders are not social services. Befrienders need to be aware of the responsibilities without being scared or put off.

Volunteers befrienders need to know when something isn't right - when there is a need for signposting or referral.

Using advocacy services where necessary - this page of the national website (various resources) has the details for Westminster, The Advocacy Project.

<http://opaal.org.uk/location/the-advocacy-project/>

Healthwatch - keep them informed of any general safeguarding issues arising from shortcomings in local services.

ACTION POINTS:

1. Send out information and share contact emails
2. Explore possibility for a bid for free training sessions for volunteers in key areas
3. Members feel free to contact the group or individuals either themselves or through Emma at OW with information requests or shares etc.
4. Next meeting: Tuesday July 10th, 10.00am, at One Westminster 37 Chapel St.

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