



**Good Practice
Guidelines
for Setting Up a
Befriending Service**

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Guidelines for Setting Up a Befriending Service

- This publication has been produced by Volunteer Now in collaboration with the Belfast Befriending Network (50+). Organisations who have contributed to the development of this publication are: *Action MS, Action on Disability, Belfast Central Mission, Leonard Cheshire Disability, May Street Presbyterian Church, NI Chest, Heart and Stroke and South Belfast Male Care.*
- Belfast Health & Social Care Trust funds a number of services for older people in Belfast and supports the work of the Belfast Befriending Network (50+).
- The publication has been produced as a starter pack for groups thinking of developing a new befriending service.
- The publication provides good practice guidance around setting up and running a befriending service.
- The publication also signposts to organisations who can provide further information and guidance around befriending and managing volunteers.



Launch of Befriending Network (50+) - November 2011
Frank Johnston, Volunteer Now; Sandra Adair, Volunteer Now; Cllr Niall O'Donnghaile and Sandra Cullen, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust.

Good planning is essential before setting out to establish a befriending service and recruit volunteers. Planning should always take into account resources available. The following areas should be considered when planning a befriending service.

How do we know the service is needed?

To identify the need for befriending, it is useful to carry out some prior research to show that there is a requirement for the service e.g. record all requests made to your organisation for a befriending service, consult with statutory bodies who may make use of the scheme you are planning or hold a public meeting with relevant stakeholders.

Are Volunteer Befrienders the right people to provide this service?

It is very important from the outset to consider why you are involving volunteers to deliver the service and what the volunteer's role will be. Are there benefits for the volunteer, e.g. in terms of combating their own loneliness? Consider the tasks and responsibilities of the volunteer and the needs of the people who will receive the service.

Who will manage the service and what will it involve?

Most befriending schemes are managed by a paid member of staff dedicated to that role and may receive support from other departments including business support, finance, fundraising and policy.

Managing a befriending scheme involves a number of time intensive tasks and responsibilities which may include:

- Project planning
- Developing policies and procedures
- Completing funding applications
- Recruiting and selecting volunteers
- Managing and motivating volunteers including: induction, training and supervision

- Processing referrals
- Completing client assessments
- Matching volunteers with clients
- Monitoring and evaluation of the scheme
- Maintaining regular contact with clients and volunteers
- Processing volunteer expense forms
- Observing health and safety legislation and good practice.

Aims: It is important to consider at the outset who the scheme will support (client group and geographical area) and what the scheme will set out to achieve.

Objectives: Once the scheme aims have been established it is important to agree upon objectives; the methods by which you will achieve your aims. Objectives should be specific and measurable e.g. recruit and train 20 volunteers within the first year, match 20 volunteers to 20 clients, deliver 400 hours of befriending each month.

Outcomes: The impact, changes, benefits, learning and other effects that will occur as a result of the scheme e.g. with older people, they might be about reducing social isolation, with ex-prisoners, they might be about reducing re-offending which will in turn have a wider impact in society. Outcomes may be expected or unexpected and can be positive or negative.

Outputs: The activities that the scheme will generate e.g. visits, training, newsletters, outings etc.

Organisations need to consider how the objectives, outcomes and outputs will be measured. This will be covered in the Monitoring and Evaluation section of these guidelines on pages 32-33.

Good practice requires organisations to have policies and procedures in place to govern the day-to-day operation of activities. Having policies and procedures in place will help ensure fairness, good practice and to manage risks associated with the scheme. In turn this will benefit and protect volunteers, the organisation and clients.

Any organisation involving volunteers in its activities should have a Volunteer Policy in place.

A Volunteer Policy should cover the following:

- Statement of values around the involvement of volunteers.
- Important procedures and practices in working with volunteers that covers the recruitment and selection of volunteers and management of volunteers including induction, support and supervision.

The Volunteer Policy should also refer to other relevant policies and procedures including:

- Health & Safety
- Expenses
- Complaints/grievances
- Data protection
- Confidentiality
- Problem solving
- Code of conduct/code of behaviour
- Equal opportunities
- Inclusion and diversity
- Lone working
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults/child protection.

For assistance in drawing up a Volunteer Policy or other policies and procedures contact **Volunteer Now on 028 9023 2020.**

The aim of risk management is to control and minimise risk and its impact as far as possible. While it is never possible to eliminate risk entirely, it can be reduced through good planning and procedures.

It is essential to carry out a risk assessment before commencing the scheme to protect clients, volunteers and the organisation.

The risk assessment process should involve four key steps:

- Identify the risks for those involved in befriending and these may include lone working, working with vulnerable groups, abuse from either party, personal injury, travelling at night, stressful circumstances and breach of confidentiality. These are just a few of the potential risks.
- Evaluate the risks according to the likelihood of the risk occurring and the consequence of the risk e.g. the likelihood of a volunteer abusing a befriending client may be low but the impact of this risk if it did occur would be very high.
- Manage/control the risk by identifying and implementing measures for reducing the risk. Measures to manage risk may include AccessNI checks, references, good recruitment and selection processes, support and supervision procedures, insurance and policies such as confidentiality and code of conduct.
- Regularly review the risk assessment. It is important to record all information and regularly review and update the risk assessment. It is good practice to review risk assessments at least once per year and when changes take place within the scheme e.g. new tasks, new volunteers/clients, new venues etc.

If your befriending scheme involves staff and volunteers working with either vulnerable adults or children you have a responsibility to have policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of these vulnerable groups. Where legally required under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, an Enhanced Disclosure should be carried out through AccessNI.

For information on standards and guidance for good practice in safeguarding vulnerable adults, please refer to the publication *Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: A Shared Responsibility*.

For information on standards and practice for the protection of children and young people, please refer to the publications *Getting It Right* and *Our Duty to Care*.

Both publications are endorsed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and are available on the Volunteer Now website publications section at **www.volunteernow.co.uk/publications**

For further information and guidance, please contact the Volunteer Now Safeguarding Team on 028 9023 2020.

Volunteers involved in your organisation may expose themselves to risks from time to time. Organisations or volunteers can be found legally liable if something goes wrong. Volunteers may risk personal injury or liability arising from the course of their volunteering or loss or damage to their own property. It is in everyone's best interest to ensure that adequate insurance cover is provided.

Your organisation may have a responsibility for damage, loss or injury experienced by volunteers but also for any loss, damage or injury caused by negligent acts of volunteers. If a volunteer acts improperly or in an incompetent way, and the organisation was directing the activity of the volunteer, it could be held liable. No group can afford to operate without adequate insurance and run the risk of a claim for damages being taken against them. However it is equally important that your organisation takes steps to minimise the risks of a claim. The key to good insurance, is good risk management.

Organisations will need to get in touch with their insurance company to ensure they are covered for involving volunteers; do not assume that any insurance covering employees within the organisation will also apply to volunteers. The insurance company should be informed of all tasks that the befrienders will be undertaking and where activities will take place.

Volunteers who will be using their cars as part of their befriending role (e.g. for taking clients on outings) should be informed by the organisation that it is essential for them to let their insurance company know that they will be using their car for volunteering and should ask for written confirmation from their insurance company that they are covered for this purpose; this should not incur any extra costs.

Having identified the aims of the scheme and the role of volunteers, it is necessary to decide how referrals can be made.

The following issues should be considered:

- The referral process should be the same for all to ensure fairness.
- Referral agents should be given clear, appropriate information about the scheme, eligibility criteria and what the volunteer will and will not be expected to do.
- Eligibility criteria: this will depend on the aims of the scheme and the client group supported. You may need to take into account factors such as age, location and physical or mental health. You may also need to take into account other factors such as the level of support the person already receives from other agencies or the risk of social isolation.
- How can a referral be made? Will the scheme accept self referrals or do referrals need to come from an agency e.g. Probation Officer, Youth Services, Health & Social Services?
- How will the scheme be promoted to ensure that eligible clients are being reached?
- A standard referral form should be available to gather appropriate information to help assess the client's suitability for the scheme
- Ensure that all referrals are followed up in a prompt and timely manner.
- The organisation should maintain regular contact with referral agents
- If a person does not meet the referral criteria they should be informed promptly and reasons should be explained.
- Consider putting in place a waiting list for the scheme if it's receiving too many referrals. You need to consider how the waiting list will be managed, it may be on a 'first come, first served' basis or may involve prioritising clients depending on factors such as the level of support already received.

If the client meets the referral criteria, the next step is to carry out a client assessment. This should take place in the venue where the befriending will take place, usually the home of the client. The client assessment provides an opportunity to find out more about the client and their expectations of the service.

The client should be given appropriate information about the scheme, the organisation and what the volunteer will be expected (and not expected) to do. There should be an opportunity to ask questions about the scheme. It is important to also ensure that the client actually wants a befriender, as this is not always the case.

Areas to cover at the assessment include:

- Aims of the befriending scheme
- Volunteer role and responsibilities
- Confidentiality
- Boundaries
- Details of contact person from your organisation
- Procedures for reporting issues/concerns
- What to do if they need to cancel a visit
- Support available
- Matching process
- Next steps.

The client assessment should also form part of your overall risk assessment. The risk assessment should take into account the home of the client if this is where the befriending will take place and the client themselves.

SAMPLE CLIENT REFERRAL FORM

CLIENT DETAILS

Name: D.O.B:
Address: Client Tel:
Next of Kin: Next of Kin Tel:

REFERRAL AGENT (e.g. GP, Social Worker, Probation Officer)

Name:
Address:
Tel: Email:

DETAILS OF ANY RELEVANT MEDICAL CONDITIONS/SPECIAL NEEDS:

.....

ARE THERE ANY OTHER AGENCIES PROVIDING SUPPORT? IF SO, GIVE DETAILS INCLUDING DATES, TIMES etc.:

.....

PLEASE INDICATE LEVEL OF FAMILY SUPPORT:

.....

PLEASE OUTLINE REASONS FOR REQUESTING VOLUNTEER SUPPORT:

.....

NO REFERRAL SHOULD BE SENT WITHOUT PRIOR CLIENT/FAMILY CONSULTATION. HAVE YOU MADE THE CLIENT/FAMILY AWARE OF THIS REFERRAL?

YES / NO

Referring Agent signature:

Date:

Agency:

Tel:

It is important to consider the tasks, skills and qualities that will be required of volunteer befrienders before recruitment takes place and to write up a clear volunteer role description.

A volunteer role description will help:

- Recruitment and selection - this will identify the qualities and skills that the role requires
- Ensure that staff, volunteers, referral agents and clients are clear about what tasks the volunteer is or is not expected to do
- Help the volunteer to decide whether they are really suited to the role
- Provide a structure for supervision
- Provide a template for review.

The role description should include:

- Title of role e.g. Volunteer Befriender
- Information about the scheme including who it supports and its aims
- Outline of volunteer tasks and responsibilities including:
 - listening and chatting
 - leisure activities
 - attending supervision sessions as required
 - undertaking essential training
 - observing organisation's policies and procedures
 - maintaining boundaries
 - information on where the befriending will take place e.g. at the home of the client, at a community centre.

- Volunteer specification - this should cover personal qualities, attitudes, skills, experience and knowledge required of volunteers. This will depend on the aims of the scheme, volunteer role and who is being supported and may include:
 - caring nature
 - non-judgemental
 - respectful
 - good listening skills
 - reliable
 - good communication skills
 - able to maintain confidentiality
 - knowledge of issues affecting client group
- Time commitment
- Details of support available for the volunteer such as induction, training, supervision, volunteer get-togethers, reimbursement of expenses
- Contact details for the organisation.

The recruitment and selection process should be fair, inclusive, effective and transparent.

Promoting the befriending opportunity

Before running a recruitment campaign, the organisation should consider:

- Who they want to target?
- How many volunteers are needed?
- What materials/resources they will use e.g. posters, leaflets, internet, word of mouth?
- Where they will advertise? Consider geographical area and locations e.g. GP Surgeries, Libraries, Community Centres.
- Diversity with regards to age, gender, race, religion etc. should be a key consideration in a recruitment campaign.
- Recruitment materials should include information on the organisation, the role and details of a contact person who will deal with enquiries.

Initial Enquiry

Prospective volunteers who contact the organisation in response to recruitment advertising need to be given clear information about:

- The organisation
- The befriending scheme
- The befriending role and tasks including minimum time commitment
- Support available e.g. expenses, training
- Recruitment and selection procedures.

It is important to have a process in place for dealing with initial calls including a contact person who can respond to any enquiries. It may be useful to put together an application pack which should include: information on the organisation, the role description and an application form. Application forms should not be too complicated and should only ask for relevant information.

SAMPLE VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Name:

Address:

Tel: **Email:**

Date of Birth:

1. Why do you wish to become a Volunteer Befriender?
2. Do you have any work experience or skills which might be useful for Volunteer Befriending?
3. Do you have any hobbies or interests?
4. Please indicate when you would be available to volunteer (days/times).
5. Are you prepared to travel a short distance to a client's house if they live slightly outside your immediate area? (N.B. travel expenses are paid). Please tick:
 - Yes, I have access to a car and could travel
 - Yes, I could use public transport
 - No

6. Please provide details of any special needs or relevant medical conditions.

7. Are there reasonable adjustments that we could make as part of the recruitment process that would enable you to enjoy equality of opportunity in seeking a befriending role with us?

8. Please provide names, addresses and telephone numbers of **two Referees** for the Befriending Scheme. (Referees can not be relatives).

Reference 1

Reference 2

Name:

Name:

Address:

Address:

Tel No

Tel No:

Email:

Email:

I confirm that all the details on the application form are correct and accurate.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Declaration of Criminal Convictions, Cautions and Bind-Over Orders and consent to AccessNI check

You have applied for a position that is defined as Regulated Activity under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007. It also falls within the definition of an 'excepted' position under the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979.

Any information received will be treated confidentially, and we will talk to you about it before a final decision is reached. After the decision is made the information will be destroyed.

A check will only be carried out if you are considered to be the preferred candidate and are being offered an appointment. You **must** tell us now if you have ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or cautioned by the police, or bound over. You **must** tell us about **all** offences, even minor ones such as motoring offences, and 'spent' convictions, that is, things that happened a long time ago. If you leave anything out it may affect your application.

Please complete the form attached and return it to the address given.

The form also asks you to give your written consent to the check. If you do not consent we will not accept your application. Applicants can also submit a separate statement of disclosure if they wish. This may include details such as the particular circumstances around the conviction(s); how circumstances may have changed; and what has been learnt from the experience.

In Confidence

Do you have any prosecutions pending? Yes No
(if yes, please give details)

Have you ever been convicted at a court or cautioned by the police for any offence? Yes No

If yes, please list details of all convictions, cautions or bind-overs. Give as much information as you can, including, if possible, the offence, the approximate date of the court hearing and the court which dealt with the matter.

Declaration of Abuse Investigation(s)

Have you ever been the subject of an Adult or Child Abuse investigation which alleged you were the perpetrator of any adult or child abuse?

Yes No

If yes, please list full details below including the name of the police unit or Health and Social Care Trust involved in the investigation. If possible, please provide the approximate date(s).

Declaration and Consent

I declare that the information I have given is complete and accurate, I understand that I will be asked to complete an AccessNI Disclosure Certificate Application Form if I am considered to be the preferred candidate and I consent to the Enhanced Disclosure Check being made, and I agree to enquiries relevant to this declaration.

Signature:

Print name:

Any surname previously known by:

Position applied for:

Date:

Taking up references is an important part of your risk management process. Potential referees should be sent a covering letter, a reference request form, a copy of the volunteer role description and some information on your organisation, along with a pre-paid envelope for returning the reference. You may wish to contact referees by telephone if you feel you need a fuller picture.

Reference request forms should not be too complicated nor too time consuming and have a clear structured format, this will encourage swift completion and return.

REFERENCE FORM – CONFIDENTIAL

Name of Volunteer _____

Volunteer Role _____

This role involves working with vulnerable adults/children and as an organisation committed to their welfare we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with such individuals.

- Yes No

If you have answered yes, we will contact you in confidence.

If you are happy to complete this reference, all information contained on the form will remain confidential. We would appreciate you being extremely candid in your evaluation of this person.

How long have you known the person?

In what capacity?

SAMPLE REFERENCE FORM (cont)

What positive qualities does this person possess?

How would you rate the person on the following:

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>
1. Reliability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Maturity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Self motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Honesty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How well does this person relate to other people?

Please give your impressions of this person's suitability for volunteering.

Please give any other relevant information.

Name: (print) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The interview provides an opportunity to assess the suitability of the prospective volunteer and to give the volunteer further information on the befriending role and what is expected. Interviews can be formal or informal.

The purpose of the interview is to:

- Give the applicant more information about the organisation and the role
- Give the volunteer the opportunity to discuss relevant points, ask questions and opt out if necessary
- Get to know more about the volunteer.

It is helpful to use a standard interview form to ensure fairness and consistency.

Before the interview

- Familiarise yourself with the application from the volunteer and the volunteer role description/specification
- Familiarise yourself with the interview questions
- Gather any information the volunteer might need or want
- Make practical preparations
 - allow enough time
 - book a quiet and welcoming room
 - inform anyone else who might need to know e.g. reception.

At the start of the interview

- Welcome the volunteer and make introductions
- Thank the volunteer for their time and interest
- Inform the volunteer of the format of the interview
- Offer refreshments.

Useful interview questions

- Why do you wish to volunteer with...?
- Why are you interested in this role?
- What do you hope to gain from volunteering?
- What experience/skills/interests do you have that would help you in this role?
- Do you have any other questions?

Other important points to establish

- Availability of volunteer
- Volunteer's knowledge/understanding of the client group and relevant issues
- Contact details for references if not on application form
- AccessNI check to be carried out
- Details of any additional support needed by the volunteer for the role.

After the interview

- Volunteers should be informed at the end of the interview of the next steps and timescales
- Write up any notes/records while the information is still fresh
- Follow up on any further information you need to help you make the match or selection such as references
- Keep the volunteer informed of your progress and any decisions made as soon as possible
- If the volunteer has been unsuccessful ensure that the reasons for this decision are explained carefully and sensitively to the volunteer.

Induction should take place before the volunteer commences their role and should provide the volunteer with all the information they need to carry out their volunteering duties.

A good induction should enable the volunteer to feel welcome and valued, supported, more confident about their role and to understand more about the organisation and what they will be doing.

It is useful to cover the following areas in an induction programme:

- **Information about your organisation** - aims, philosophy, ethos, services provided and why your organisation involves volunteers.
- **Information about the befriending scheme** - background to the scheme, clients, structure and management.
- **Volunteer role and responsibilities** - role description, volunteer handbook (if available), expectations of volunteers, code of conduct, boundaries.
- **Policies and Procedures** - important to provide the volunteer with a copy of any relevant policies and procedures available and to go through these with the volunteer (see page 6).
- **Support and Supervision** - who should the volunteer report to? How often will supervision take place? How do you make a complaint or raise concerns? What support is available e.g. social events, newsletters, training, expenses etc?
- **Important aspects of health & safety** - tour of the building, personal facilities, fire procedures, parking etc.
- **Introduction to other staff members/volunteers** - it is good for volunteers to meet with all staff and other volunteers involved with the befriending scheme.

Support and supervision are closely linked but are not the same. Support deals with the person while supervision deals with the task.

Support is an enabling role and focuses on the needs of the volunteers, both personal and practical.

Support can be structured or unstructured and may include:

- Good communication - regular contact by phone, email, letter.
- Regular training - to equip volunteers for their role.
- Social events/coffee mornings/outings to thank volunteers and make them feel valued and appreciated. These events allow volunteers to meet other volunteers in an informal setting.
- Volunteer Newsletter.
- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses - it is good practice to reimburse expenses if you have the funds to do so.
- Nominate volunteers for local awards.

Supervision is about managing the task and how the volunteer carries this out, in line with the aims and objectives of the organisation.

Functions of supervision include:

- Monitor and evaluate task and performance
- Improve confidence and competence in role
- Recognise and deal with problems
- Identify training needs
- Provide a framework for agreement on change
- Provide a framework for discussion about the role and responsibilities
- Provide a framework to share perceptions on how the work is progressing. This encourages the volunteer to consider what is going well and what is not going so well.

It is good practice to have a written policy on how often supervision takes place and one to one supervision between the volunteer and Volunteer Co-ordinator should take place at least once a year. This ideally should be face-face but a telephone call is an acceptable option. It is also good practice to use a standardised form and keep a record of the notes taken at the meeting including action points and any issues raised.

MATCHING PROCESS

A good match between the volunteer and client is likely to lead to a longer term befriending relationship with less problems and risks and will more likely have appropriate outcomes.

The matching process should take into account information gathered through referral/application forms and through interviews/meetings/assessments with both the client and the volunteer.

Issues to be taken into account when matching:

- Client's needs
- Aims of the scheme
- What choice, if any, will be given to clients and volunteers e.g. will clients be given choice about age or gender of volunteer?
- Skills and experiences of volunteer
- Personalities
- Interests/hobbies of client and volunteer
- Availability
- Locality - what travel costs may be incurred?



It is extremely important that volunteers are made aware of boundaries from the outset, this forms an important part of the risk management process. It is good practice to have a clear and consistent written document outlining the 'dos and don'ts' of the volunteer role. This could form part of the Code of Conduct/Code of Behaviour for the volunteer.

Some suggestions around 'dos and don'ts' are given below.

Do:

- Be prepared to listen and let the person talk
- Observe confidentiality at all times
- Let the Volunteer Co-ordinator know if you have to cancel a visit
- Keep to set days and times for visits unless discussed with the Volunteer Co-ordinator
- Be helpful and sensitive
- Inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator of any concerns or incidents such as behaviours or deteriorating health
- Respect the client as an individual

Don't:

- Accept money from clients
- Administer medication
- Undertake any form of personal care e.g. toileting, washing, dressing
- Lift or move heavy objects
- Become involved in family disputes or personal affairs
- Enforce your own religious or political opinions on a person
- Give your personal contact details to the client unless discussed first with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

These lists are not exhaustive and will depend on the volunteer role and the scheme.

The first meeting between the volunteer and befriending client can be quite daunting. The Volunteer Co-ordinator should always be present at the first meeting to make introductions, discuss practical issues around the befriending relationship, answer any questions and to set a date and time for the next visit.

Areas for discussion may include; the purpose of the relationship, role of the volunteer, expectations, times, days and duration of visits, procedures to follow if volunteer/client cannot attend a scheduled visit, confidentiality and boundaries. These areas may already have been covered at interview stage and induction, however it is good to go over these again to ensure clarification with both the volunteer and service user.

After the meeting, the Volunteer Co-ordinator should make a follow up call to both the client and volunteer to discuss how the introduction went. If either the client or volunteer are not happy with the match and are not willing to meet again, this must be handled with extreme sensitivity.

The Volunteer Co-ordinator will need to provide extra support for the client and volunteer in the first few weeks of being introduced as both get to know one another. Regular contact by email, telephone or in person is important.

Befriending relationships can come to an end for many reasons. It may be that the relationship was for a fixed period of time or that both volunteer and client have reached a mutual agreement to end the relationship. In other cases endings may be one-sided and sudden; the relationship may break down for personal reasons or as a result of ill health or even death. As with the end of any relationship, this may evoke a range of feelings for the volunteer and client such as relief, distress, sadness, disappointment or anger.

Important points to consider:

- Where issues or problems arise, it's important for the Volunteer Co-ordinator to act promptly to see if the issues can be resolved; it may be that more support is needed for the volunteer, a short break or a different time/day for visits. Regular communication and ongoing support for clients and volunteers is important to ensure that any problems are identified and dealt with as early as possible.
- If a relationship does break down this should be communicated sensitively to both parties. The referral agent should also be informed.
- Focus on the successful elements and achievements of the relationship.
- Consider another match for the volunteer and/or befriending client, if appropriate.
- Complete an exit interview and questionnaire for both client and volunteer. You may want to include questions around reasons for leaving the scheme, whether the scheme met original expectations, positive aspects, negative aspects, support given etc.

Monitoring and evaluation are different but related processes.

Monitoring involves routine and systematic collection of data to provide information about the scheme and what it delivers.

Evaluation involves analysing monitoring information to see how the scheme is performing against its objectives and targets and whether it is achieving what it was set up to do.

Why are monitoring and evaluation important?

- Ensure delivery of a quality service for clients, volunteers and referral agents
- Provide relevant information for funders and other stakeholders
- Be aware of what is going well and areas for improvement/development
- Assist organisational planning.

Information that you monitor will depend on the aims and objectives of the scheme and will often be agreed with funders. Some examples of information that may be useful to collect are given below.

- Number of referrals to the scheme
- Number of volunteers recruited
- Number of training sessions delivered for volunteers
- Number of befriending matches
- Number of hours of befriending delivered each week/month
- Equality/diversity monitoring
- Feedback from service users, volunteers and referral agents.

It is important to have systems in place for collecting and analysing data and to ensure that information is recorded on a regular basis.

Evaluation involves using information gathered to make judgements about the scheme and its outcomes. Areas to consider when evaluating a scheme may include:

- Whether the service has been successful in achieving its objectives
- Whether there have been any unexpected outcomes
- The impact of the scheme
- Does the evidence indicate that there is still a need for the service, or even a need for expansion?
- Are more resources needed to deliver the service?

Evaluation will use monitoring information but may also require gathering of additional information.

Methods for gathering information for monitoring and evaluation purposes include:

- Monthly reports to include quantitative data around the scheme e.g. how many hours of befriending delivered, how many matches etc
- Questionnaires
- Evaluation forms
- Discussion groups
- Referral forms (service users and referral agents)
- Application forms (volunteers)
- Waiting lists
- Equality monitoring
- Support and supervision notes
- Records of complaints.

For information, resources and training on good practice around befriending and volunteer management

Volunteer Now

Community Projects Team
129 Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 1SH
Tel: 028 9023 2020
Email: info@volunteernow.co.uk
www.volunteernow.co.uk

Mentoring and Befriending Foundation

Suite 1, 4th Floor, Building 3
Universal Square
Devonshire Street North
Manchester
M12 6JH
Tel: 033 0088 2877
Email: info@mandbf.org
www.mandbf.org

Befriending Networks

63-65 Shandwick Place
Edinburgh
EH2 4SD
Tel: 013 1225 6156
Email: info@befriending.co.uk
www.befriending.co.uk

Access NI

PO Box 1085

Belfast

BT5 9BD

Tel: 030 0200 7888

Email: accessni@ani.x.gsi.gov.uk

www.dojni.gov.uk/accessni

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Volunteer Now delivers services across Northern Ireland.
We have offices at:

129 Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 1SH

34 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast
BT2 7DB

Houston's Mill
10 Buckna Road
Broughshane
BT42 4NJ

Fermanagh House
Broadmeadow Place
Enniskillen
BT74 7HR

Ballybot House
28 Cornmarket
Newry
BT35 8BG

T: 028 9023 2020

E: info@volunteernow.co.uk

W: www.volunteernow.co.uk



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