

VIN'S BEFRIENDING SERVICE

Connecting People to Places



Happy@Home- targeting elderly isolation to increase wellbeing

VIN is a registered charity with a wealth of experience supporting communities and community organisations. We guide organisations in the effective use of their resources, best practice and extracting the most from networks, connections and opportunities.

We also represent those groups who are seldom heard, and ensure their views are taken into account in policy and service formulation and design which is important for peoples overall health and wellbeing. VIN began life in 1981 and celebrated it's 30th anniversary in 2020. It is a relevant, credible and trusted organisation. VIN runs a number community projects which include our community transport and befriending programmes.

Introduction

Over 2 million people in the UK aged 75 and over live on their own and this number will increase over the next ten years. Isolation and loneliness affects many of these people and often leads to mental and physical issues and a poor quality of life. Happy@Home, run by Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire provides the opportunity for an elderly person to regularly socialise with a friendly Befriender in a supportive environment which creates new memories and enables older memories to be shared.

How Happy@Home works

The Happy@Home project has been running in Northampton since 2018, having been successful in Daventry and South Northamptonshire.

Our Happy@Home project coordinator recruits, supports and trains volunteer befrienders to visit or telephone an elderly person who feels lonely or isolated.



By developing a friendship, the relationship builds confidence and wellbeing, helping the elderly individual to stay in their own home for longer and feel less lonely. It also enables the elderly person to access information and services they would otherwise find difficult to reach. With dramatic cuts in other support services like Day Centres, our Befriending service has never been so needed.

In the past 18 months we have recruited 250 Volunteer Befrienders and Supported 132 lonely elderly people. To be eligible for the Happy@Home scheme, referrals are considered for anyone aged 60 and over and who live within West Northamptonshire which covers Daventry, South Northamptonshire and Northampton.

“COVID has taught us the importance of community. However for some people it has exacerbated their isolation. Being lonely or isolated is equivalent to smoking 20 cigarettes a day in terms of health harm. Befriending has significant cost-effective impact as well as benefits to those who are volunteering to befrienders. Voluntary impact Northamptonshire is doing something of great value in addressing this need. Support for Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire is especially important at this time where a significant number of charities as with other business have closed increasing pressure on those remaining.”

David Smart – Trusted local GP and part of the General Practice Alliance

Our Volunteer Befrienders

Our Happy@Home project coordinator carefully recruits volunteers of all ages and backgrounds who are keen to help others. They are fully trained and supported by our Happy@Home staff team. When they meet up, our volunteers build up a close bond with the clients. Some may just sit and chat, while others may carry out hobbies or other activities together. Our volunteers also benefit from the satisfaction of giving people a sense of purpose whilst building their own confidence and having the opportunity to gain new skills and experiences.



Maggie Allen
Happy@Home Volunteer Befriender

“

I think Happy at Home is one of the best volunteering schemes I have come across. I look forward to these visits and enjoy my time with this client. I'm really not sure who gets the most from this – the client or me!

”

“

If you are thinking of becoming a befriender, don't hesitate, it's such wonderful experience!

”

Tracy Opoku Afriyie
Happy@Home Volunteer Telephone
Befriender



How your organisation's support can help

With limited budgets and reduced public sector support, VIN and our community really need your support to maintain and grow our Happy@Home programme.

This is how you could help:

- Fund the recruitment, training and placing of 4 Home Befriending volunteers - £500
- Fund the recruitment, training and placement of Four Telephone Befrienders - £250



What we will provide to you

- An update of the impact of the Happy@Home programme (with stories about your individual befriender) for your internal and external communications.
- Our branded Happy@Home logo to be used within your own communications.
- Acknowledgment of your support in our Annual Report and on our website.
- Services of the organisational CEO at a meeting or gathering of your choice.
- The opportunity for your staff and colleagues to become Befrienders through our Employee Supported Volunteering Programme.
- The opportunity to receive Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire's support to develop your own Corporate Social Responsibility strategy.
- An open invite to our networking forums, Voluntary Sector Assembly and Poverty Truth Commission.
- Discounted training on subjects such as health and wellbeing in the workplace, equality and diversity and leadership and development.

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PLACES

"A great friendship is irreplaceable.. it can inspire you to grow into a better version of yourself" - Anon



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For more information on VIN's
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