



Wellbeing Befriending Service

Referral Criteria and Guidance

What is befriending?

Befriending is a therapeutic relationship that provides meaningful 1-1 support either over the telephone, or on an online platform for a period up to six months. Our trusted volunteer befrienders are trained to support people in the Harborough district to develop positive wellbeing and reduce isolation. We recognise that our clients may be feeling anxious, stressed, lonely and isolated for many different reasons. By working together we support clients to make steps towards achieving positive changes to overall wellbeing.

How does it work?

A befriending volunteer will have taken part in specific training around mental health awareness, safeguarding, equality and wellbeing. The befriender will listen without judgement and support the client to set realistic goals based on the 5 ways to wellbeing at a pace that suits the individual. A befriender will contact the client every week at an agreed time and have a conversation about overall wellbeing and help the client to set a target for the week ahead.

We value individual differences and work hard to ensure everyone has equal opportunities to the support on offer. Each client is carefully matched with a volunteer.

Who can access the Wellbeing Befriending Service?

- Anyone 18 + living in the Harborough District and experiencing mild to moderate mental wellbeing challenges, including depression and anxiety
- Anyone who is keen to develop positive wellbeing
- Anyone who has a desire to change and is ready to take active steps towards positive wellbeing

How can I get the support or refer someone?

Clients can be referred by themselves, by a family member, or friend. Any professionals (including GP's, Health Workers, Social Services, Social Prescribers, Local Area co-ordinators, Mental Health Workers) can refer as well as community groups. Please complete the referral form and send to wellbeing@vasl.org.uk or alternatively phone **01858 456042**. After the referral is received, the client will be contacted by the Wellbeing Befriending Manager who will chat with the client in more detail about what the service can offer the client in terms of support.

What makes a good referral?

Please **ONLY** refer people to our Wellbeing Befriending Service if they are committed to making improvements to their overall wellbeing through guided self-help befriending sessions. We would encourage you to consult with the client about the referral being made and be clear about the expectation to commit the support.

Relevant Information

It is important to note that although our befrienders are there to support clients emotionally, we are not a service that provides support in an immediate crisis. If you or someone you know needs support whilst in crisis, please:

- Phone **999** - If you need **URGENT** help with any mental or physical health emergency
- Phone **111** – to find out what support is available to you (service available 24 hours a day)
- Phone **Samaritans** on **116 123** any time for free to speak to a trained volunteer who is there to listen and support you.
- Text **SHOUT** anytime if you are in crisis on **85258** and a trained volunteer will contact you. (This is a free service available 24 hours a day)
- Phone **Leicestershire Mental Health Crisis Support Line** on **0808 800 3302** (Free local 24 hour service).

