



BEFRIENDING SCHEME

Information Pack



This pack is available in large print, and on computer disk. Other formats can be supplied on request.

mha
Mental Health Aberdeen



Table of Contents

Page No.

3	Welcome Page
4	Information for Clients
6	Project Aims
7	Client Confidentiality Policy
8	Client Complaints Procedure
9	Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

Additional Items

Information for Clients Leaflet

King Street Centre
51 King Street
PETERHEAD
AB42 1TA

Telephone: 01779 470122
Fax: 01779 470107
E-mail: enquiry@companions.org.uk



Welcome to COMPANIONS Befriending Scheme, a project of Mental Health Aberdeen. Within this pack you should be able to find all the information you need to help you decide if you would like to have a volunteer befriender. If after reading through the pack you still have questions you would like answered, then please feel free to contact me at the above telephone number.

Who can use the service?

COMPANIONS support people who are currently, or have been in the past, clients of the Community Mental Health Team, or Old Age Psychiatry Team. If you have contact with a CPN or other mental health professional you can ask them to help you join the scheme. Alternatively, you might like to contact COMPANIONS yourself at the above address and telephone number. We are always pleased to hear from people to answer their questions or tell them more, however, there is no obligation to join the scheme.

How much does it cost?

We can provide a Companion for you free of charge. The only cost to you is your own expenses if, for example, you go out with your volunteer to an event or place that charges for admission. The Companion will be able to claim their expenses from the scheme.

How often will I see my Companion?

Once we have found a volunteer for you, you can try this out for six visits before deciding if you want to carry on. We usually arrange a visit or outing each week or fortnight for around one hour. However, you can discuss this with your Companion and Co-ordinator, and changes may be made to the schedule accordingly. We do not help to deal with benefits, do housework, help with personal care, act as an advocate etc. We appreciate that there may be times when you cannot meet your Companion, and this is always taken into consideration. Visit arrangements are reviewed each year.

What if I want to make a complaint?

You will find enclosed within this pack a copy of COMPANIONS' complaint procedure. Should you have a complaint and you would like more information or help, you can either discuss with your volunteer or contact myself. If you prefer to speak to someone outwith the scheme, to help you with making your complaint, you can contact the Advocacy North East Service (01467 651604).

We aim to provide a reliable, flexible service, tailored to your needs, which contributes to your recovery from mental ill health.

Flora Todd
Manager COMPANIONS Befriending Scheme





Information for Clients

1. Confidentiality
 - Volunteers will respect your privacy and understand your right to confidentiality.
 - Other people don't need to know about your volunteer – you might want to think about what to tell people if they ask why you were with your volunteer.
 - Volunteers do need to discuss how things are going with the Coordinator, including any concerns or worries they have about your well-being.
 - Very occasionally, the Coordinator will need to discuss issues arising with the person who referred you to the Scheme, or other people currently involved in supporting you. If this has to happen, the Coordinator will discuss this with you first.

2. Expenses
 - MHA will refund your volunteer's expenses.
 - The only cost to you is your own expenses (e.g. cost of cup of coffee), so this may have some bearing on the type of activities you wish to do with your volunteer.

3. Visits/contact
 - Usually once a week for approximately 1-2 hours. Contact can be in your own home, going out for coffee, a walk, going to the shops etc. Volunteers cannot help sort out benefits, do odd jobs or housework, personal care, act as a driver, etc.
 - If you need to contact your volunteer to rearrange your visit or for any other reason, this needs to be done through the Coordinator. Volunteers are not permitted to give their contact details to clients.

4. Volunteers
 - All volunteers receive induction training, which is over 4 days (5 hours per day in duration). Training covers introduction to befriending and mental illness; boundaries, confidentiality and life cycle of befriending relationship; communication skills and empowerment; personal safety, expectations and support.
 - All volunteers must undergo an Enhanced Disclosure (which checks police records) before being matched with a client.
 - All volunteers must supply two references as part of the application process.
 - All volunteers will have an identity card.

5. Matching

- Where possible, clients and volunteers are matched by similar experiences, interests and personal circumstances.
- You will be matched with a volunteer on a 6-visit trial period initially. This will give you both the opportunity to see how this is going. After this time, if you decide to continue meeting your volunteer, a Befriending Contact Arrangements Form will be drawn up (which details the day and time of visits, activities to be undertaken, etc). The befriending arrangement will be reviewed at least once a year after this time.

Please get in touch with your Co-ordinator if you have any questions or would like more information:

Peterhead/Fraserburgh - Flora Todd (01779) 470122

Banff/Turriff - (01261) 818330



Registered Office: 1 Alford Place Aberdeen AB10 1YD
Scottish Charity No. SCO 12306
A Company Limited by Guarantee No. SC 100864.



www.companions.org.uk

Project Aims

Companions Befriending Scheme is one of the projects in the Grampian area currently managed by Mental Health Aberdeen, a charity, which aims to achieve best possible Mental Health for the people of Aberdeen City and the Shire.

Mental Health Aberdeen aims to achieve this by:

- Providing high quality, responsive and flexible services to support and assist recovery.
- Influencing funders to bring about change and innovation within services
- Working in partnerships with other agencies
- Promoting positive mental health to the people of the area
- Providing information and campaigning on mental health issues as they arise.

The work of Mental Health Aberdeen is based on commitment to:

- Being a caring and supportive organisation, respecting the rights of all individuals
- Being an open organisation accountable to our members, staff, volunteers, clients and the wider public.
- Involving clients to help shape the services they need.

Companions recruits, trains and supports voluntary befrienders who are matched with people aged 18 and over who experience (or have experienced) difficulties with their mental health. The main purpose of this contact is to support and promote participation in social activities, which contributes to that person's recovery from mental ill health.

The logo for Mental Health Aberdeen, consisting of the lowercase letters "mha" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

Mental Health Aberdeen

Registered Office: 1 Alford Place Aberdeen AB10 1YD
Scottish Charity No. SCO 12306
A Company Limited by Guarantee No. SC 100864.



Client Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality is a means of providing you with safety and privacy.

- a) Staff and volunteers within Mental Health Aberdeen treat any information received from clients as confidential and as such will not be communicating to other agencies without that person's consent;
- b) Information received from clients is regarded as confidential within the organisation. It may only be shared with other staff with respect and discretion;
- c) Information received from a client will not be shared with another client;
- d) Any written information concerning a client will be stored in a secure manner according to the principles set down in the Data Protection Act 1998 with access restricted to staff and the individual concerned;
- e) Information will be recorded in a factual manner, without personal opinion or judgement;
- f) Individuals will be allowed to see any records held on them and make written comment on the information. Clients can contact the Co-ordinator/Manager to arrange a time to visit the Scheme's offices to view their file.
- g) Any client who is unhappy with the level of confidentiality is entitled to use the Complaints Procedure to pursue the matter.

Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances may arise if the Manager, Co-ordinator or volunteer has concerns for believing that serious harm may occur to you or to other people. The Manager, Co-ordinator or volunteer will try and reach a change of agreement with you (i.e. gain your permission to discuss the matter with another agency/person involved in supporting you). Failing this, they will consult with the Services Manager Aberdeenshire. The reasons for a change in agreement will be recorded and discussed with you as soon as seems appropriate after the event.

King Street Centre
51 King Street
PETERHEAD
AB42 1TA



Telephone: 01779 470122
Fax: 01779 470107
E-mail: flora@companions.org.uk

www.companions.org.uk

Complaints Procedure for Clients

If you have any concerns about your relationship with your Companion, or the way your Companion behaves toward you, please feel free to contact the COMPANIONS' Manager through the Mental Health Aberdeen offices at Peterhead.

Peterhead Flora Todd	COMPANIONS Befriending Scheme Manager	(01779 470122)
--------------------------------	--	-----------------------

You can expect to hear from us **within 5 working days** if possible, and you will be kept informed about any decisions made.

If you still feel your complaint has not been dealt with, then please contact the following:

Angelika Eberhard
Senior Services Manager (Aberdeenshire)
Mental Health Aberdeen
King Street Centre
51 King Street
PETERHEAD
AB42 1TA

A meeting will be arranged (but not necessarily take place) to discuss your complaint **within 5 working days**. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the meeting taking place.

Finally, if your complaint is unresolved it can be referred in writing to the Chief Executive, contacted at the Aberdeen address below. A further meeting will be arranged (But not necessarily take place) **within 5 working days**. The outcome of the meeting will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the meeting taking place.

You can have a representative, friend, or colleague attend the meetings with you to help you present your case.

We hope that you will have no cause for complaint but you can be sure that if you do, we will treat your complaints with sympathy. Our aim is to deal with any problems, quickly, effectively and with discretion.



Mental Health Aberdeen

Registered Office: 1 Alford Place Aberdeen AB10 1YD
Scottish Charity No. SCO 12306
A Company Limited by Guarantee No. SC 100864





Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

Companions Befriending Scheme recognises that certain groups and individuals within society experience discrimination both directly and indirectly. We are committed to the principles of equal opportunities in employment and service delivery, as it affects individuals and groups whether they are members, service users, employees or volunteers.

Companions Befriending Scheme is committed to opposing direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, gender, sexuality/sexual orientation, disability, age, history of physical or mental ill-health, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, responsibility for dependents, trade union activity and political belief. We are taking active steps to encourage practices which counter discrimination, and recognise that this requires the participation and commitment of all employees, volunteers, members and service users of Companions Befriending Scheme.

Companions Befriending Scheme accepts the statutory requirements laid down in the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), the Race Relations Act (1976), the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (2006).



Mental Health Aberdeen

Registered Office: 1 Alford Place Aberdeen AB10 1YD
Scottish Charity No. SCO 12306
A Company Limited by Guarantee No. SC 100864.