



## **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VOLUNTEER BEFRIENDERS**



## Welcome to the Happy at Home Project.....

The Initial Visit Sheet which you will have received with this Guidance Booklet gives you the details of the person we would like you to visit as well as details of your Co-Befriender where appropriate.

We have visited the person you are to visit and the Project Coordinator will accompany you on your first visit, so your visit is expected. The person you are to visit has also received an information sheet telling them about the **Happy at Home Project** and outlining what your role is and what can be expected from you.

## What do you need to do after your introductory visit?

If you are visiting alone without a Co-Befriender then contact the person you are visiting, introduce yourself and arrange a time to visit that is convenient to you both.

If you are visiting with a Co-Befriender then contact them first and arrange a time that is convenient for you to visit. Then one of you should contact the person you are visiting, introduce yourself and check that this time is also suitable for them.

## The visit itself .....

Don't forget to take your **identity card** with you to confirm that you are visiting on behalf of Happy at Home. The person you are visiting will also have been told that you will have an identity card and that they should ask to see it before they let you into their home. We hope that you will be able to visit regularly – hopefully once a week – but don't worry if you can't manage this.

### **What is my role during the visit?**

Your role is to provide some company and social contact in order to lessen the feelings of loneliness that the person may be experiencing. You could sit and chat or perhaps engage in some activity that the person enjoys, perhaps reading a book, doing a jig-saw, sharing a hobby, playing a game or looking at photos.

You should not get involved in carrying out any other tasks such as shopping, lifting people, or household activities.

Other services are in place which could meet these needs – if the person does express a need for this type of help you should make a note and then you should pass these on to Adult Services' Adult Duty Team (see back page for contact details).

If anything were to happen whilst you are making a visit which results in an insurance claim being made do not worry as the Churches Together Insurance policy will cover you. If such an incident should occur then you should report it to the Project Coordinator as soon as possible.

### **Can I take the person I am visiting for a trip out?**

-  
If you and the person you are visiting would like to make a short trip out, perhaps a drive to the seafront, it is vital that you seek confirmation from your own motor vehicle insurance company that you are covered for this. We must stress that this is your responsibility to do so.

Please do not take the person out for a walk using a wheelchair, without discussing this with us first. If this is something you would like to pursue then we can arrange the necessary training for you. This is to make sure that both you and the person you are visiting stay safe and healthy.

If you wish to pursue any other type of activity with the person you are visiting eg taking someone out to lunch, please understand that these take place outside the 'Happy at Home' project.

### **What if I have any queries or concerns?**

If you have any concerns, problems or queries or if any issues arise which you feel should be followed up then you can contact the Project Coordinator. If it is out of office hours then you can contact the Emergency Contact Number. These numbers can be found on the back of this booklet. This includes any concerns about possible abuse because these people will act as your 'Responsible Person'. *(Remember your Protection of Vulnerable Adults training and refer to our policy on Recording an Incident of Abuse which you will have received with this policy).*

### **What if I can't make the visit?**

If, for any reason, you can't make the visit you have arranged, you should contact your Co-Befriender and check if they are happy to make the visit alone. If they are not, then you should contact the Co-ordinator who will try their best to arrange for another Befriender to visit.

If there is no Co-Befriender involved then contact the person being visited and arrange another time. If you are not going to be able to visit for a period of time then contact the Co-ordinator who will try their best to arrange for another Befriender to visit.

### **What about confidentiality?**

In the course of your visit you may come across or be told information concerning the personal affairs of the person you are visiting. It is very important that you treat this information as strictly confidential and that you do not discuss it with anyone else. Neither should you share the contact details of the person you are visiting with anyone else.

The only exception to this is if you feel it is necessary to pass on any comments or concerns to the Co-ordinator or the Adult Duty Team regarding the needs of the individual or concerns about possible abuse.

### **After the visit.....**

We would like you to record your visit on your record on the Happy at Home website (you will be given instructions on how to do this). If you do not have access to a computer you can record your visit on a timesheet - please ask the Project Coordinator for a supply of these.

## **Your Safety and Welfare**

Your safety and welfare are of the utmost importance to us and we would ask you to consider the items covered in our Lone Worker Policy which you will have received with this document.

### **A final word.....**

-  
Both Churches Together in South Tyneside and South Tyneside Council appreciate and value the work that you are doing through this project to bring companionship to the person/people that you visit.

We know that you are committed to the project and are a caring individual who wants to do the best for the person/people concerned. We have, however, had to set boundaries relating to your role within this project to make sure that both you and the individual concerned are covered and safe for both health and safety and legal reasons.

If you are ever unsure of anything then please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you ever have any ideas about how we can improve the project please contact the Project Coordinator – all of your suggestions are very much appreciated.

### **CONTACT NUMBERS**

-

Co-ordinator: (Margaret Stephenson)  
Tel: 0191 529 2122

Adult Duty Team: Tel: 0845 130 4959