

Case Study

Befriending and Re-ablement – Volunteer Befriender

Lauren (**L**) talks to one of Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton's Befrienders, Vikki, (**V**) to see what it's like to be a volunteer Befriender. The service is available throughout Sefton for anyone aged 50+ with a Sefton G.P. Clients are seen by a paid member of staff for up to 6 weeks support, after which they meet their volunteer Befriender weekly.

L Hello Vikki, Thank you for very much coming to talk to me today.

V You're welcome, thank you for having me

L How long have you been a volunteer Befriender with Age Concern for?

V I have been volunteering with my client for about 3 months now

L How did you hear about the service?

V I was just walking past the office in Southport and saw an advert in the window. I had already heard of Age Concern so went online at home to have a look at what I could do to help. I decided that, yes, it was for me and I got in touch.

L What was it that initially drew you to becoming a Befriender?

V Just to help people really. My mum suffered the loss of my stepdad a few years ago and she was very lonely. It was only me who was going into her and it made me think that there are lots of people that don't have the support that I gave her and it would be nice to actually do something to help them.

L Was the application process hard? What did it involve?

V No, it was really easy. It just involved coming in to the office and speaking to one of the staff I went through all of the checks and read the policies and was then matched with somebody.



L That is the DBS check that you did to ensure the safety of everyone involved. Now you are matched with a lady who lives nearby and you go to see her each week don't you..

What do you enjoy doing together? What do you do when you visit?

V Just chatting really, she has very limited mobility so she can't go outside very much although we did go out on our last visit. It was a major thing for her which she really enjoyed. We just talk, catch up and chat about our hobbies. We talk about anything really, we just have a natter.

L So it sounds like you both have similar interests, was it a good match for you?

V Definitely, yes it was. We get on really really well.

L Now you are thinking about taking on another client aren't you. What encourages you to want to Befriend somebody else? Why do you think it means so much to the clients?

V It just gives them a better outlook. If they don't see anybody, they might have carers, but other than that they may not see other people. Befrienders are just somebody they can talk to, make them feel a bit less lonely and have something to look forward to.

L And what do you get out of the volunteering yourself?

V I just love it! I really do. Just knowing I have made a difference to them. If they are feeling a bit down you can have a talk. My lady and I always end up having a laugh so if she's been feeling down by the time I'm finished it's all forgotten and this really cheers her up. The short time makes such a big difference to her, it really does.

L So would you encourage other people who may be thinking about becoming a volunteer or having the service themselves? What message would you give to them?

V I'd say go for it. It works both ways; the volunteer gets so much out of it and if someone is looking for that support, they get so much out of it as well.

L Well thank you very much Vikki, for coming to talk to me and for giving potential volunteers an insight into the role.

V You're welcome.

To become a volunteer Befriender or to access the Befriending service

Contact us on 01704 542 993 (Option 4)