



NORTH BERWICK COASTAL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS Volunteer Support and Supervision Policy

It is a requirement of befriending with Community Connections that volunteers attend regular individual support and supervision.

Support and Supervision sessions with the Supervisor will occur 1 month and 3 months after the volunteer has been matched and thereafter 3 monthly. Support and Supervision will also occur at the end of a match. In addition, Volunteers will be contacted by phone every 6 weeks for a brief check that all is going well.

Additional support and supervision will be arranged with the Supervisor as required if issues arise with the befriending match. Either the Supervisor or the volunteer can request this.

Support focuses on the volunteer's needs as a Befriender and the issues of volunteer practice and organisational accountability. Volunteers are encouraged to contact Community Connections at any time if they have issues they need to discuss.

These sessions will be recorded and signed by the volunteer and Supervisor, stored in the volunteer's file and used as a record of the support undertaken by the volunteer and a note of actions for the next 3 months. The volunteer will be provided with a copy. The information shared will be within Community Connections.

The purpose of Community Connections' Volunteer Support and Supervision is to:

- Ensure that volunteers are supported both emotionally and practically and feel comfortable with their work.
- Give credit for the work that has been done.
- Allow the building of a relationship with one designated worker.
- Allow the discussion of the impact of the relationship on the befriender.
- Reduce stress and isolation.
- Support the volunteer in developing their work and personal development and further training opportunities required to enhance their practice.
- Help the volunteer to "stand back" from the detail of their work and see the bigger picture.

- Review what type of support the Befriender has been offering.
- Ensure the goals of the support are clear, can be met, and are OK with the volunteer.
- Agree priorities for the next period (Are these challenging, appropriate?)
- Clarify that the objectives of the befriending are being met.
- Ensure the project's boundaries and guidelines are being observed.
- That the volunteer is meeting Community Connections aims and objectives:
 - to provide good quality support to our clients, who are feeling isolated and experiencing difficulties
 - offer flexible practical and emotional support to the client
 - link the client into local activities or services as feasible
 - enable clients to gain social confidence and make new friendships
 - provide opportunities for individuals to become involved in supporting members of their local community
 - provide opportunities for individuals to gain skills and qualifications as part of their personal and/or professional development

The format of the support and supervision

Prior to supervision sessions:

- Information about the requirement of support and supervision will be given to volunteer befrienders at induction training
- It is the responsibility of the Supervisor as volunteer manager to set up supervision sessions with each volunteer allocated to their specific area (allow about an hour for the session)
- Notice of proposed dates for supervisions sessions are given to the volunteer by the Supervisor when they are matched with a client
- Preparation will include reading notes from the last supervision session and making a note of any items to be raised.
- The Supervisor will either arrange a telephone call/Skype etc at a suitable time, or (if feasible) book a suitable room, i. e. as far as possible private, quiet, away from ringing phones etc. A supervision session is an important event and should be kept completely free from interruptions.

During the session

In order to make sure that the purpose is achieved, both parties will have items for the agenda and these should be compared and agreed at the beginning of the session. All sessions will follow the format outlined in the volunteer support and supervision forms and volunteer personal development forms which include discussions on the following:

- Previous agreed action points
- Round up of support provided
- Focus of match
- Relationship with client and any communication issues
- Issues with boundaries, confidentiality etc
- Client's current needs (including change of circumstances)
- Training needs/information needs
- General issues related to volunteering
- Future plans including whether volunteer wants to continue
- Feedback from client, if agreed
- Monitoring and evaluation of progress (completion of form)
- Date of next phone contact and supervision meeting

After the session

Notes of the supervision will be kept and copied to both parties after the session. They will be kept in the volunteer befriender personal file. All files are kept in a secure location to which only the Supervisor has access. Other staff or Board Members involved in the befriending service have access to the information, but will only consult the file if necessary to respond to a telephone query.

Confidentiality

Open communication in supervision is one of the methods by which trust is built between staff and volunteers, and for this reason it is important there should be a common understanding about confidentiality between supervisors and supervisees, explicitly discussed and agreed as part of the supervisory relationship.

Part of this understanding must be that absolute confidentiality cannot be promised. It is clearly the case that at least in the worst eventuality - either grievance or disciplinary - information disclosed in supervision may have to be shared with others. It is also clear that confidentiality is very difficult to police, and that its maintenance relies on the discipline and discretion of the parties involved.

Any discussion about confidentiality should acknowledge these facts and both parties should make decisions about what to discuss in supervision in this light. It goes without saying that casual gossip about information disclosed in supervision is unacceptable.

References

Befriending a client can provide numerous valuable opportunities to develop new skills and gain useful experience to add to the volunteer's C.V. and/or support job applications. Community Connections can provide a reference after you have been supporting a client for 3 months. We can provide a basic reference prior to this detailing training undertaken and performance during the course.

CS Draft 2, October 2021