

We are seeking funding to run a new volunteer befriending scheme. The **Living Your Best Life - Volunteer Befriending Scheme** will be a bolt-on to our highly successful **Lifestyles** project. This will enable us to provide a much-needed and cost-effective addition to a well-established and already valued project operating across Ashfield and Mansfield.

The service users accessing Lifestyles are at risk of slips, trips and falls. Some live alone and some are reliant on an elderly partner (invariably also living with long-term health conditions) with little access to respite.

The other aim of Lifestyles is to reduce isolation. Transport fears, loss of confidence and adjusting to life changing health or personal circumstances all serve to isolate people at what may be a very vulnerable point in their lives. We would like to develop a responsive befriending scheme which gives the best scope for meeting local need and provides maximum flexibility to support people out of isolation and into community involvement and integration.



Some of those we work with are bereaved and are struggling to adapt to living alone after a lifetime of socialising as a couple. We know that there is a real need for a volunteer befriending and respite service. Whilst there is some local provision, these are chargeable and out of the financial reach of those on a low income.

The project will be run by a Befriending Co-ordinator who will work to recruit, train and retain volunteers, promote the scheme and liaise with other local services to enable people to live their best life.

In Ashfield, there are 24,230 pensioners and a quarter of these live alone, more than a fifth have no car; 15% of pensioners are claiming pension credit which means 3,634 pensioners are living on a basic minimum income; 18.9% of the population in Ashfield are over 65 and this will continue to rise rapidly over the next 10 years. Providing support through a responsive and flexible befriending and respite scheme will have a profound positive impact on people's lives, reducing isolation and helping them to continue living independently in their own homes for longer.



**The cost of running this project for one year is £19,120.**

The part-time Befriending Co-ordinator will build, train and manage a team of volunteer befrienders. Given the potential vulnerability of service users, the volunteer befrienders will be DBS checked and references will be taken. The Befriending Co-ordinator will match the volunteer with the service user and support both as appropriate.



The befriending scheme will be flexible and responsive, enabling the beneficiary, not just to have visits at home, but to go out of the home for shopping trips and days out, so that beneficiaries horizons are broadened. We know through the highly successful Lifestyles project that once people regain confidence, the impact can literally be life changing as this light touch (but high impact) support can act as a catalyst; opening access to new friendships, social groups, a new purpose in life and improved strength, mobility and well-being.

The other direct beneficiary of this project is the volunteer. Some choose volunteering as it provides a sense of purpose and the opportunity to give something back to the community. For others, volunteering is a proven direct route into employment, whereby the individual can learn new skills, develop confidence and enhance employment prospects. With an aging population, there are a wide number of employment opportunities which could directly result from volunteering with this project including working in adult social care.

Volunteer Befriending Scheme Costs for One Year		
Item	Detail	Cost
Volunteer expenses	Covering volunteer travelling expenses	£3,120
Salary for part-time Befriending Co-ordinator	Based on 2 days per week plus administrative and management costs	£16,000
		<b>£19,120</b>



To discuss this project in more detail contact:

Samantha Clarke  
Lifestyles Co-ordinator

Ashfield Voluntary Action  
The Health & Well Being Centre  
Portland St  
Kirkby-in-Ashfield  
Nottinghamshire  
NG17 7AE