

Phone a Friend Service Volunteer Role Profile

Suffolk Libraries is looking to redefine how the public see libraries. We want to develop an experience which expands our traditional audience, but which also engages new audiences.

We offer a free telephone befriending service for people who may be socially isolated, such as older and more vulnerable people, so they can enjoy chatting with someone over the phone. Having a friendly chat with someone on a regular basis can make a real difference to the way a person feels and can help improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

As a volunteer, you will be matched with someone who has requested the service and will get to know them from the comfort of your own home. It's a chance to discuss interests, hobbies, sign post them to other services and suggest new and different things to do. As a telephone befriender you can make a real difference to a person's life.

Commitment:

Ideally a commitment of 1-2 hours per week (longer if desired) for a minimum 6-month period.

Key Elements of the Role:

Working under the direction of the Volunteer Engagement Manager, you will receive initial training on safeguarding and equality and diversity. You will also be provided with information and guidance on how to approach the phone calls and the different situations that you may encounter.

Volunteers will need to make time for a call of up to 30 minutes duration to their clients at a pre-arranged time. You will need to have a friendly chat with your clients and be able to signpost them towards services that may be of help or interest to them, as well as promote elements of the library service where relevant. Should you encounter any issues that concern you when speaking to your clients, you will escalate this to the Volunteer Engagement Manager.

Person Specification:

We are looking for volunteers who are:

- Reliable
- Have excellent listening and verbal communication skills
- Computer literate and have good telephone skills
- Able to show empathy and understanding
- Friendly
- Committed to helping libraries and our customers.
- 18 years of age or over
- Able to work on their own initiative

Role Boundaries:

Volunteers are not permitted to take on any other responsibilities such as delivering items/food/medication or provide transport such as to hospital appointments. Volunteers will be required to agree to our volunteer terms and conditions prior to starting in the role.

If you are interested, please contact diane.moore@suffolklibraries.co.uk for further details or complete the online application form [on our website](#).