

A typical [befriending] service would cost about £80 per older person, compared to savings of about £35 in the first year because of the reduced need for treatment and support for mental health needs. Taking quality of life improvements as a result of better mental health into account the monetary value of savings would be around £300 per person per year.



- I understand more about the issues facing older people
- It increases my opportunities for personal development
- It improves my own social skills and social networks
- Volunteering helped 48% of people move into employment

What do volunteers value about the relationships they build?

- It's something to look forward to
- It helps me get out and about into my local area
- I feel like part of the community
- I know more about what goes on locally
- My physical health is better
- I feel much less isolated

What do people value about befriending?

Derbyshire Trusted Befriending Network is a partnership of organisations providing befriending services to adults in Derbyshire. It exists to make sure that isolated and vulnerable adults who could benefit from befriending support are able to do so, and that people who use befriending services can be confident that they are safe and well run.



Befriending in Derbyshire: Making an impact 2016/17

83% of all referrals come from health agencies

Over 1,100 lonely people are currently supported by befriending services in Derbyshire and there are at least 1,600 waiting for a regular visit

79,000 volunteer hours are given each year to helping people feel less lonely. If each volunteer were paid the National Minimum Wage, that would equate to £596,700!

67% of befriending takes place in people's homes, making it a great option for the frail and housebound

SCOPE & SCALE

50%

People with stronger social relationships had a 50% increased likelihood of survival than those with weaker social relationships



Up to 150 referrals per month are made to befriending services in Derbyshire

What happens to this demand if services shrink?

Loneliness levels are highest amongst those aged under 25 and over 55. Amongst older people, those especially at risk include ethnic minority elders



Most organisations offering befriending in the voluntary sector are being affected significantly by a combination of reducing support from statutory agencies and other funders, increased demand for services, and uncertainty caused by political change

Loneliness poses a significant threat to health...

HEALTH IMPACT



It is a significant risk factor for a wide range of mental and physical health problems, including **depression, high blood pressure, sleep problems, reduced immunity and cognition** in the elderly.

Older people who are lonely or isolated have substantially increased chances of developing dementia.

For such older people, loneliness is associated with high blood pressure, an increased number of GP visits, and higher incidences of falls

Mitigating loneliness will improve quality of life and may also lead to reduced health and social care costs.

It can have a modest but significant effect on depressive symptoms in the short and long term when compared with usual care or no treatment.

Befriending services in Derbyshire offer **extremely good value for money** – against costs of around £800,000 they deliver over £7,000,000 of value – **a return of nearly £9 for every £1 spent**

DIFFERENCE MADE

The benefits for befriendees of receiving support through a befriending scheme are significant and include:

- ↓ a reduction in isolation (reported by 86% of people);
- ↑ an increased feeling of being part of the community (86%);
- ↑ increased independence (57%);
- ↑ an increased ability to socialise (70%) and;
- ↑ improved physical and mental health (49% and 73% respectively).

Many older people look forward to 'their' befriender visiting every week. For some, their befriender is the only person they see during the week who is not coming simply to fulfil a physical care need. There is huge importance attached to this relationship.

Befriending Networks (2015)



In addition, there are a range of benefits for others involved – such as the families and carers of those being befriended and the statutory agencies who would have increased workload and costs if the schemes were not in operation.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Derbyshire Trusted Befriending Network consists of

28 ORGANISATIONS offering befriending services to...

OVER 1,100 PEOPLE with an additional 1,600 waiting for such support at any given time.

765 VOLUNTEERS GIVE

70,000 HOURS support each year

WORTH £672,000 PER YEAR (at the Real Living Wage)

The benefits for those undertaking the befriending include...

Increased employability (48%)

Improved physical and mental health (76% and 86%)