

Make a difference to a young persons life

Volunteer with us



Find out more about  
Volunteering with us!

# Introduction

Thanks for taking the time to learn a bit more about Bfriend. We are a small charity delivering one to one befriending support to children and young people, aged 8-18 living in South Ayrshire. Our befrienders are all volunteers that work together with our staff team to deliver memory making moments for young people.

## Our Vision and Mission

### Vision

All young people in South Ayrshire should be equal, happy and able to access support. They should be treated with respect and their opinions and ideas listened to and considered.

### Mission

Bfriend will provide young people with opportunities to come together, make friends and be included. In the Project young people will be treated equally, increase in confidence and be happy.

### Befriending is ...

- fun!
- a minimum 6 months commitment to a young person.
- flexible - befriending takes place twice a month at times that suit you.
- a fantastic way to use your free time.



# So what is befriending?

*'Befriending offers supportive, reliable relationships through volunteer befrienders to people who would otherwise be socially isolated.'*

*The results of befriending can be very significant. Befriending often provides people with a new direction in life, opens up a range of activities and leads to increased self-esteem and self confidence.'*

([www.befriending.co.uk/about/what-is-befriending](http://www.befriending.co.uk/about/what-is-befriending))

Bfriend provides a befriending service which is coordinated and managed by an experienced staff team, who ensure that befrienders are supported throughout their time with us.

Once training has been completed, befrienders commit to meeting a young person twice a month for a fun activity.

This time together can help develop a young persons interest in something new, grow their confidence and self-esteem and provide them with a positive relationship. Fun and friendship is at the heart of what we do!

*"An amazing, rewarding and eye-opening experience. There are no words to describe the feeling of making a difference to a young persons life."*

**Befriender**



*'Befriending is empowering.'*

*'It has definitely empowered me.'*

*Ava, aged 16.*

# Our Young People

Young people are referred to our project by social work, schools, other third sector organisations or by the families themselves. We support young people aged 8 - 18 throughout South Ayrshire who would benefit from social opportunities and having a supportive adult to spend time with them.

Young people at the project may have experienced a wide range of adversity in their childhood and this is often a barrier to participating in groups, forming friendships and developing their own confidence and self-esteem.

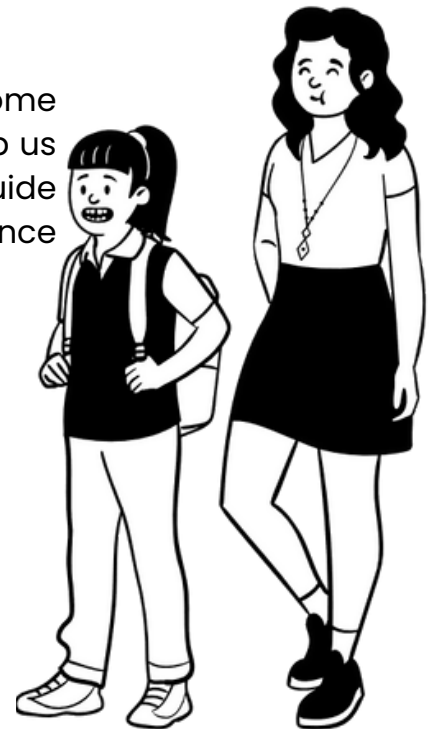
**Befriending works!** The young people at the project have reported many benefits to having a befriender including, helping them to do new things, increasing their confidence, help with building trusting and safe relationships and reaching new goals.

Some young people have gone on to become part of our youth committee, **Beyou**. They help us to make decisions about the project and guide us to make sure we provide the best experience for the young people and their befrienders.



'Befriending is empowering. It has definitely empowered me'

*A, 16 years old*



**92%** experienced increased confidence through trying new activities.

**89%** of young people attended regular outings and experienced a reduction in social isolation.

**50%** of young people set and worked towards a goal. Examples include climbing a hill, opening a bank account and returning to school.

Stats from 2022/2023

# Befriending Activities

With their befrienders support and encouragement, our young people have had some magical outings and experiences. Here are some examples of what our befrienders have made possible:

*Supported to open first bank account*

*Film Project*

*First trip to the pantomime*

*Being part of community art project*

*Learning First Aid*

*Trip to Arran*

*Alpacas Walk*

*Dumfries House Assault Course*





# Volunteer Spotlight

Helen has been volunteering with us since April 2023. She has brought her experience, skills and cheerful personality to her befriending role and has been a wonderful asset to our befriending family.

## **Why did you decide to begin volunteering at Bfriend?**

I retired a couple of years ago and started to think about volunteering and doing something community based in 2022. I'd initially thought of doing something with the elderly, however it was my husband who had heard of Bfriend and thought the opportunities they offered sounded fun. Being around young people is refreshing and different!

## **Helen has joined us as a one to one volunteer but has also taken part in our group outings and volunteer social nights. What have you enjoyed most?**

Volunteering with Bfriend has definitely been fun as I've been matched with a young person who has similar interests to me like being outdoors, music and cake! I feel I've developed a rapport with a young person and I've watched her come out of her shell. We have really good banter & I do feel a genuine connection with her.

## **While we aim to improve the lives of the young people we support, befriending also has benefits for our volunteers. What benefits have you experienced?**

I've enjoyed doing activities that are new to me like painting and cycling round Millport, but I've also appreciated learning about life through the eyes of a young person. She's so positive and spending time with her is uplifting.

## **Would you recommend volunteering?**

I'd absolutely recommend volunteering as you'll receive excellent training, always feel supported by the project team and most importantly enjoy making a positive difference to a young person.

# Benefits of Befriending

Volunteering with Bfriend not only benefits the young people, it can also have a huge impact on your life too. From getting out and about more to supporting your own wellbeing, befriending has many advantages for our volunteers. Hear from them about what makes volunteering with us so worthwhile!



## New Experiences!

'... I have also benefitted from getting out a lot more, not only have I helped my young person to get out more, they too have helped to get me out more and try new things which is amazing'

**'It (volunteering) has also benefitted me when it comes to my university course, I feel far more confident in my ability due to the hands on experience I have had with the project for my future career.'**



## Enhance Skills & Experience

Build your experience of working with young people for a change of career, applying for further education or simply freshening up your CV.

**'An amazing, rewarding and eye-opening experience, there's no words to describe the feeling of making a difference in children's lives.'**



## Health and Wellbeing Benefits!

70% of our volunteers say there has been an improvement in their own emotional wellbeing since joining the project.



# Time to Befriend

## 1 APPLY

You can contact us on 01292 264000 for an informal chat about befriending. We will send you an application form or you can apply directly on our website: [www.bfriend.org.uk/volunteer-application](http://www.bfriend.org.uk/volunteer-application)



*Scan Me!*



## 2 MEET US!

We will invite you to meet the team to discover more about the project and make sure it is the right volunteering opportunity for you.

## 3 TRAINING

Our 12 hour induction training is informative and interactive. It is designed to give you all the tools to begin befriending.



## 5 BECOME A BEFRIENDER - THE MATCHING PROCESS

This involves telling you all about the young person you have been matched with, meeting with them at their home and finally going out with them on your first outing which will be supported by your Project Coordinator.



## 4 TRAINING DEBRIEF

After your training you will have the opportunity to reflect with a Project Coordinator and ask any questions you might still have.





# Training

It is important that our volunteers feel ready to support the young people in the project. Therefore we have an initial training programme which can be flexibly delivered but usually takes place over four sessions.



The training is relaxed and informal. We can be flexible with the dates and start times to suit potential volunteers. Our training space is well equipped and comfortable.

We cover a range of topics such as; Adverse Childhood Experiences, Boundaries, Risk and Emergency Situations, Being a Befriender and Child Protection.



Our training materials and resources have been developed by our project coordinators and can be adapted to suit your needs. On completion of the training all volunteers will have built their own training resource with additional research, hand outs and materials.

Our training is designed to be fun and interactive with a variety of group exercises, case studies, paired activities and discussions. You do not need to have previous experience of working with children. Our training will provide you with the tools to get started as a befriender.



# Can I be a befriender?

## **I've thought about befriending but not sure I have the time.**

After the initial training, which can be delivered flexibly to suit you, the commitment for one to one befriending is **two outings a month**. That's around 5 hours a month to make a real difference. Some people can spend 5 hours a week on social media!

## **Do I need qualifications?**

No. At Bfriend we value difference and each of our volunteers brings something unique to the project regardless of qualifications. You need to be confident to carry out befriending on your own and complete a short form after each of your outings to let us know about all the fun you had.

## **What age do I need to be?**

Volunteers must be 18+ but there is no upper age limit!

## **I don't have a lot of money to pay for outings.**

All of our befrienders have an outing budget of around £25 each time they meet their young person. We encourage our befrienders to take part in activities too! Travelling by bus, train, car? Travel expenses are also covered by the project.

## **I don't have my own children and have never done anything like this before. Would I be a good befriender?**

You don't need previous experience of working with children and young people, all you need is a desire to make a difference and be open to learning as part of the befriending role.



# Befriending in focus



**'Befriending is very fun, like a place to forget about your worries because you are out doing fun stuff. There's just no time to worry.'**

**Lilly age 11.**

I've been at the project for a few years, and I've had 2 befrienders. My first befriender was funny and kind. My new befriender is kind and thoughtful and also funny.

**Lilly is a young carer from a large family. She was referred to the project because she was not socialising and was struggling with school life. It was difficult for her family to provide opportunities for her due to the different needs of the children.**

I was going through a hard time. I didn't talk to anyone I locked myself in my room. I wouldn't talk to anyone for months. I didn't feel anything. I don't think I know what I felt. Everything was very hectic.

**When Lilly was matched with a befriender she was nervous about meeting someone new but excited at the prospect of having someone who was interested in her and helping her to do new things that she had never tried before.**

I was actually really excited when I started at the project because it was the first project ever I was part of without my siblings. Since I have been matched with a befriender everything has changed! I'm a lot more happier. I definitely smile much more. My befriender is my extra comfort. I trust my befriender and I can tell her anything. It's nice to have someone else to talk to. Now I'm confident and more independent.

**Lilly has had a whole range of new experiences with her befriender; from trips to the Farm Park, Culzean, trampolining, to pantomimes, dinners out and the cinema.**

I like the excitement when you get your new befriender. The excitement! You can't sit still! The rush when you first meet them. If I wasn't part of the project there are lots of things I would miss out on.

**Lilly's family, her befriender and staff have all seen a positive change in her. She is growing in confidence and is looking forward to starting secondary school.**

# Our Staff

Gary

Lorna

Tracey

Karen



**Our staff team is committed to providing the best support possible for the young people, families and volunteers in the project. To start your befriending journey contact us today.**

**01292 264000**

**info@bfriend.org.uk**

**www.bfriend.org.uk**



QiB is the only award in the UK which is specifically tailored for befriending services. The Award is achieved by providing evidence to successfully demonstrate that the project meets or exceeds the standards expected. In 2024 we achieved the Excellence Award.



The Volunteer Friendly Award is a Scotland wide quality standard for volunteer programmes, managed by Volunteer Scotland and delivered through a local TSI. Our local TSI, VASA, had some amazing feedback for us, "Outstanding, professional recruitment and support to volunteers, yet with a sound volunteering culture developing a very caring, supportive relationship with all volunteers".



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(REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: SC236725; REGISTERED  
CHARITY NUMBER: SC020989).