



A Guide to Setting-up  
and Managing A Volunteer  
Befriending Service for  
Older People

**BEFRIENDING SERVICE COORDINATION**  
**PILOT GUIDEBOOK**



**Helping older people in need**



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### 1. Who is ALONE?

ALONE is an independent charity that works with the 1 in 5 older people who are homeless, socially isolated, living in deprivation or in crisis. We provide Supportive Housing, Befriending, Community Response and Campaigning services to hundreds of older people every week. We receive no Government funding for our day-to-day activities so we rely solely on the generosity of the public to continue our work. ALONE's services are quality approved and are delivered 365 days a year. We operate with a ratio of 1 staff member to every 18 volunteers.

### 2. What does ALONE do?

**ALONE Housing** provides homeless older people with the comfort, safety, and support they need to age in the community. Staff and volunteers work with each resident to ensure they receive the practical and personal supports required to live fulfilling, independent lives as they age. Every ALONE home is age friendly, has its own front door, and is warm and comfortable.

**ALONE's Befriending Service** provides companionship for isolated older people. Loneliness is a serious health risk and a volunteer visit of just one hour a week can make a huge difference. Volunteers can support older people to get out and about, help with day to day tasks, or have a chat over a cup of tea at home. All ALONE volunteers are trained, Garda vetted and supported by experienced mentors.

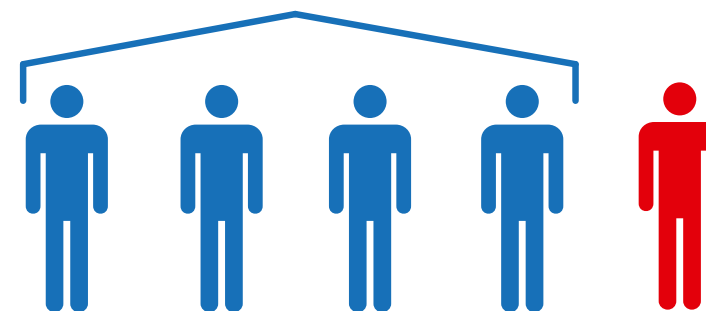
**ALONE's Community Response** works with older people who are in crisis situations and those who don't know where else to go for help. The main issues we deal with are poor housing, health, elder abuse, poverty or lack of services. We address the emergency situation and work with other agencies to provide long term sustainable solutions for the older people in need.

**ALONE's Campaigns** are designed to tell the truth about the challenges some older people face. We work directly with older people in need, meaning that all our campaigns represent the real situations facing the older people we work with. As well as highlighting issues, our campaigns are also designed to make real changes at an individual, local and political level.

**Fundraising** - As an independent charity we receive no government funding for the day-to-day running of our services. We rely solely on the generosity of organisations and the general public to support older people most in need. We are transparent and accountable and all of our services are quality approved. We comply with the ICTR Guiding Principles for Fundraising and our annual accounts are independently and externally audited.

### 3. The Context of Befriending Services : Loneliness is a major health issue

**1 in 5 Older People are homeless, socially isolated, living in deprivation or in crisis.**



#### “Why is Loneliness among Older People a National Health Issue?”

‘Loneliness and isolation are one of the most horrible feelings a person can have. A person can be in a big crowd of people and still feel consumed by loneliness, because the people are strangers who do not care about you’. Jack is 70 and uses the ALONE Befriending Service.

Here's what the research proves:

- Loneliness leads to a number of health issues including depression, dementia, disability, cardiovascular disease, infectious illness, cognitive deterioration and mortality (Steptoe et al 2013).
- “Loneliness is an important predictor to depression,”(Kamiya et al 2013) Depression is projected to be the second leading cause of disability worldwide by 2020(TILDA2011).
- It is documented in an RCSI 2005 study, that 29% of older people living alone reported feeling lonely compared with 6% of other groups. In Ireland, estimates suggest that the overall economic cost of mental health problems is €3 billion per annum; only cardiovascular disease is likely to contribute more to the overall burden of illness (TILDA , 2011).
- “Social isolation increases the risk of developing dementia” (Cacioppo, 2007).
- “Social isolation also has been associated with elevated blood pressure, C-reactive protein, and fibrinogen and with heightened inflammatory and metabolic responses to stress” (Steptoe et al 2013)
- There are disproportionate numbers of females and people with high support needs reporting loneliness. The proportion of females living alone increased with age, with females accounting for almost three quarters of all persons aged 85 and over living alone (CSO2012). According to a 2005 report by RCSI 32% of older people with high severe functional impairments felt lonely “quite/very often” while 38% felt lonely “sometimes” which demonstrates a strong link between disability, depression, high support needs and loneliness.

ALONE's Befriending Service aims to provide older people with a weekly visit that may bring a whole new quality to their life ultimately decreasing the likelihood of loneliness for that person. For many older people who receive this service, this is the only real human contact they have on a weekly basis; **befriending is undeniably a health support service.**

#### 4. ALONE's Commitment to Quality

ALONE are proud of the fact that we operate to the highest standards and we are leaders in quality, transparency and accountability. Our services have achieved an international ISO standard and we adhere to the following best practices:

- Our accounts are externally and independently audited, and we comply with SORP standards (Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities.)
- We publish an Annual Report which shows the work we do, the outcomes achieved and our income and expenditure.
- Our services are internally and externally audited.
- We have achieved an internationally recognised ISO quality standard for our services.
- We comply with ICTR standards in Fundraising.
- We have signed up for Investing in Volunteers standard.
- We have signed up to the Government Voluntary Code for Housing Bodies.
- Our Board operates to good practice guidelines for governance.

#### 5. Why This Guide book?

There is no guidebook available for setting up and managing a Befriending Service for older people in Ireland at the moment, which is why ALONE has taken the initiative to bridge this gap. Over the years, ALONE has been approached by several organisations with the aim to support with the setting up and running of Befriending Services, and to provide training. Unfortunately we were not always able to respond to these requests because of our own stretched resources.

ALONE is committed to quality of service delivery in Befriending Services and in 2013 we initiated a national survey to map and track the various types of Befriending Services available in the country. This survey has resulted in the publication of the first ever ALONE Directory of Befriending Services 2014. It is clear from the findings of the survey that many Befriending Services operate on an adhoc basis and that there is no sustainable or consistent quality of service within the sector. ALONE is committed to addressing this gap and to taking leadership in ensuring training and support for the Befriending Service sector. We would welcome the development of a National Network of Befriending Services that would provide a structure and framework for the development of this vital sector and we are prepared to take the first step in initiating that. We believe that these steps will lead to a strong Befriending infrastructure in Ireland that will have a lasting impact on the lives of thousands of older people long into the future.

ALONE has made this a priority of its new Strategic Plan 2014-2017, which includes the goal of 'discussing and deciding the national dimension of our activities, to offer training, supports and services in the most useful and appropriate ways.'

As part of the actions under this goal, ALONE is now publishing this Guide to Coordinating a Befriending Service for Older People'. The Guide will be accompanied by an ALONE Training programme for Befriending Service Coordinators and an ALONE Training programme for Befriending Service Volunteers.

#### 6. How to use this Guide

The Guide is divided into 4 parts as follows:

##### Part 1: Setting up a Befriending Service for Older People.

This is aimed at groups who are just setting up, and it is advised that new groups take the required time to work their way through this section and be clear about their organisational profile.

If your group is not new, you will be able to skip through this section quickly and identify any gaps in your organisational structure and profile.

##### Part 2: Starting Off a Befriending Service

This part is aimed at groups who have fulfilled the requirements of Part 1 and are ready to start off a Befriending Service. It particularly focuses on the guidelines and procedures necessary for running a quality service.

##### Part 3: Ongoing Management and Co-ordination of Befriending Service

This part is aimed at more mature services that have been running for at least six

months or a year. It deals with how to plan and manage the ongoing co-ordination of a Befriending Service once it is set up and starts to grow and develop.

##### Part 4: ALONE Templates

This Part of the Guide lists the documents and templates which ALONE has developed for its own Befriending Service which it is willing to share with other Befriending groups. Some of these templates are made available in this section and others will be shared in the ALONE Training, when participants will be trained in their use.

Each service needs to choose which part of the Guide is relevant to them at their stage of development, e.g. if you are just starting off, Part 3 may not be relevant to you right now.

What’s our vision for Befriending in Ireland?

- No older person in the country is left without services
- Consistent quality standards across all services
- Strong Befriending infrastructure for older people throughout the country

What we can do

- Lead in the development and implementation of a Befriending quality standard (This will be key in reassuring funders and supporters)
- Share knowledge and expertise
- Offer training, networking and support

**Aim of Part 1:** To support groups who are setting up a Befriending Service for Older People to be clear about who they are and what services they are providing.

Part 1 is divided into the following sections:

1. What type of service do you intend to provide?
2. Who is your service for?
3. Values and Principles
4. Rights-based Approach
5. Mission Statement
6. Management Structure & Responsibilities
7. Working in partnership
8. Funding
9. Organisational Profile

1.1 Section 1: What type of service do you intend to provide?

There are several different types of Befriending Services for Older People, so you will need to decide which type of service/s your group is offering. Below is a summary of some of the most common types – you can discuss and tick which you intend to provide at your current stage of development. Remember the services you offer may vary depending on whether you are in an urban or rural area, what resources and skills you have, what needs you are dealing with and the capacity and maturity of your organisation.

Type	Actions	Yes/No/ Not Yet
Befriending Visits	The older person is visited in their home by a Volunteer e.g. once a week or once a fortnight for about 1 hours. The Volunteer may also offer practical supports e.g. shopping and supporting the older person to join other activities and groups.	
Buddying/ Appointment Accompanying	The Volunteer may bring the older person out or accompany them on appointments e.g. to doctor, dentist, social welfare, post office etc.	
Befriending Telephone Calls	The older person receives a regular telephone call from a Volunteer to check in. This service also be complimented by an occasional visit	



Befriending in Nursing Homes, Hospitals or Respite Care	Volunteers visit older people in Nursing Homes, Hospitals or Respite Care who rarely have other visitors.	
Group Befriending	Social events are organised for groups of Older People e.g. coffee mornings, bridge, outings etc.	
Care and Repair	The older person can avail of a free specialised service for small jobs and repairs in their home.	
Advocacy	The older person is supported to ensure they get social services they need e.g. social welfare, housing, health. This often requires more specialised skill on the part of the Volunteer or Staff member.	
Other	You may have other ideas that are specific to your own area	

Befriending Services may also seek to develop or link into a Community Response Service. Community Response is an outreach service, staffed by trained professionals, that advocates for older people in, or at risk of crisis. Common issues faced include sub-standard housing conditions, poor health, financial difficulties, elder abuse and isolation. The Community Response team works in partnership with local authorities, state agencies, community and voluntary groups to achieve long-term, sustainable solutions through a case-management system. Community Response and case management is dealt with in Part 3 of this Guide-book on page 31.

1.2 Section 2 : Who is your service for?

Your service may be very general or aimed at a specific target group. The need to define your target group may emerge only as you get to know the demand. However it is useful to have discussed this before starting off – the grid on the adjoining page should help:



Target group for Service	Yes/No	Clarifications
All older people		
Older people over a definite age e.g. pensioners		Age range:
Older people in need e.g. with a disability, at risk of poverty, loneliness, health issues		Specific types of need we want to respond to:
Older people living within a particular geographic area		Our geographic area includes people from:
Other vulnerable adults in need of a Befriending Service		Clarify what other vulnerable adults you might cater for:
Other		

1.3 Section 3: Values and Principles

How an organisation does things is as important as what it does. This is its ethos and is reflected in its core values and principles. Below are ALONE’s values and principles. It might be useful for your group to go through them and discuss whether you agree with them or not. Then you can develop your own.

ALONE’s Values

Partnership

ALONE listens to the older people we work with and strives to meet their needs and help maximise independence. We work closely with a wide range of services, both statutory and voluntary.

Innovation

ALONE is committed to a process of continuous improvement by learning, training and adapting to ensure that we meet the changing needs older people we work with.





**Dignity and respect for the individual**

ALONE believes that every person’s dignity and human rights should be honoured. We work with each older person that comes to us for help to understand the issue they need support with and strive to come up with an individual solution to their individual problem.

**Transparency**

We are committed to working in an accountable, responsible and professional manner.

**Companionship**

Our volunteers provide crucial friendship to many older people. At ALONE we extend the spirit of companionship to one another and to all organisations and others with whom we work.

**Non-Judgmental**

It is ALONE policy to treat everyone in a non-judgmental, open and professional manner. ALONE’s Culture and Ethos is

- Effective and compassionate
- Creative, innovative and solution-focused
- Leaders among services for older people
- We are all individually accountable
- All staff and volunteers are equally valued
- Rights Based

**1.4 Section 4: Rights-based Approach**

ALONE operates from a rights-based approach. We feel this is very important and therefore have given it its own section.

A rights-based approach uses human rights as a framework to guide the work of the organisation. It starts from the assumption that all people are entitled to the human rights prescribed in the International Bill of Rights, including the right to life, liberty and security of person; the right to equality before the law; the right to an adequate standard of living including food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services; the right to free primary education; the right to work and equal pay; the right to freedom of movement, residency and nationality; to freedom of thought, conscience, belief, religion and the right to hold and express opinions without interference.

Crucially, a rights-based approach focuses on empowering the people you are supporting by treating them with dignity and respect at all times, as opposed to ‘looking down’ on them because they need help. In offering support, a rights-based approach accepts a person for who they are rather than trying ‘fix’ them. For example just because an older



person’s home is less tidy than your own, this does not give you the right to impose your standard of tidiness on them.

There is a lot more information explaining a rights-based approach available on the internet. Here is the link to a Policy Paper on Human Rights and Older People in Ireland launched in December 2013:  
<https://www.alzheimer.ie/Alzheimer/media/SiteMedia/ImageSlider/Fixed/ASI-HROP-A4-Online-Report.pdf>

Our rights based approach is covered in all ALONE Training. We recommend that you have a discussion on this in your group and decide if you want to adopt this approach as part of your values and principles.

**1.5 Section 5: Mission Statement.**

Now that you are clear about what services you want to offer, your target group and your ethos, you are ready to develop a Mission Statement which is a short sentence which explains clearly and simply the purpose of your organisation and what you do.

**Example of Mission Statements**

*ALONE supports older people in need through long term housing, befriending, community response and campaigning services.*

*X Befriending Service is an organisation offering one-to-one companionship and support to older people living in the X area who are socially isolated.*

Now try your own Mission Statement using not more than 25 words:

## 1.6 Section 6: Management Structure & Responsibilities

### Management Structure

Whether your Befriending Service is run by volunteers or paid workers, whether it is independent or part of a bigger organisation, it will need a management structure which oversees planning, decision-making, and key responsibilities. There should be a clear Management Committee made up of people committed to the service, including people with some management skills and experience. Given the focus of the service it is good to make sure that some of your Management Committee are older people themselves so that their voice is heard.

### Befriending Coordinator's Role

A key job of the Management Committee is to delegate responsibility for the day-to-day co-ordination of the service to a Befriending Coordinator. Whether this person is paid or voluntary, there should be a clear role description. The Coordinator then reports to the Management Committee which should meet at least once a month during the setting up phase.

### Management Responsibilities

While Management can delegate day-to-day co-ordination to a Befriending Coordinator, they do carry ultimate responsibility in a number of key areas including:

- Overall direction of the service
- Financial Accountability (see Section 8 below)
- Employer liabilities where there are paid staff
- Insurance policy to cover Public Liability for all activities. You will also need Employers Liability if you employ Staff. If you search for 'insurance for community groups' on the internet or on [www.thewheel.ie](http://www.thewheel.ie) you will come up with several companies to contact. If your Volunteers are driving older people, then check with your insurance company if you need to get them to sign that they are doing this under their own insurance policies.
- Ensuring that all mandatory and basic best practice policies are in place including:
  - Protection for vulnerable people including Garda Vetting for volunteers (see Part 2)
  - Data-protection policy to ensure that you have permission to collect and keep information from older people and volunteers, and that it is safely stored in a way specified by Data Protection legislation (See ALONE policy on Data-protection)
  - Confidentiality policy (see ALONE Handbook for Volunteers)
  - Health and Safety
- Supporting the Coordinator to ensure clear and effective quality and standards for service delivery

## 1.7 Section 7: Working in Partnership

Befriending Services can make a huge difference to the quality of life of older people. However they work best in partnership with other voluntary and statutory services. Below are a list of key services relevant to older people. Tick those that you already have some connection with and write in the name and contact details.

- Chiropody \_\_\_\_\_
- Convalescence Care \_\_\_\_\_
- Day Centres \_\_\_\_\_
- Elder Abuse Social Workers \_\_\_\_\_
- Geriatrician \_\_\_\_\_
- GPs & Health Care Centres \_\_\_\_\_
- Home Care Attendants \_\_\_\_\_
- Home Care Packages (HCPs) \_\_\_\_\_
- Home-Helps \_\_\_\_\_
- Local Clergy \_\_\_\_\_
- Meals on Wheels \_\_\_\_\_
- Occupational Therapy \_\_\_\_\_
- Physiotherapy \_\_\_\_\_
- Psychiatry of Later Life \_\_\_\_\_
- Public Health Nurse (PHN) / Registered General Nurse (RGN) \_\_\_\_\_
- Respite Care \_\_\_\_\_

A key task is to make contact with all the services you want to work in partnership with and let them know you are setting up a Befriending Service and get their advice. Some of them might have ideas for how to help or even offer to come on your Management Committee.

Remember that building trust and a good working relationship with key partners will be vital to the success of your services in terms of facilitating referrals and support for the older people. Your service will only be trustworthy if it can deliver on clear quality and standards for the management and delivery of its service.





1.8 Section 8: Funding and Finance

Funding

Setting up a Befriending Service does not have to be very expensive, especially if you are using volunteers. However you will need at least a small budget to cover some basic administrative expenses (see template below).

Funding will normally come from 3 sources:

- Fundraising events
- Donations
- Grants

Fundraising can vary from a small bag-pack in the local supermarket to a major event. Creative and innovative ideas are great, so try to attract someone with fundraising ideas and experience onto your Management Committee or as a Volunteer – just don’t try to run before you can walk!

Don’t be afraid to ask for donations once you start to publicise your service e.g. in leaflets or the local media and social media. You can also write and ask for donations from local businesses in your area – it can be very good to give details of what you want the money for as people like to know where their money is going. You can also look for practical donations e.g. furniture, kitchen appliances etc. Make it easy for people to donate by giving clear contact details and make sure you thank and acknowledge donors.

There are a wide variety of funding grants and schemes that you can apply for. A good place to start finding out about these is to register with The Wheel ([www.wheel.ie](http://www.wheel.ie)) which is a resource organisation for the voluntary and community sector and provides information on funding. Make sure you read the criteria of any funding grants before you apply as there is no point applying to a scheme if you don’t meet the criteria. There is a direct link between financial accountability and funding as any grants you apply for normally require you to submit accounts and/or bank statements.

Finance

A key management responsibility to ensure that the Befriending Service is:

- Financially sustainable i.e. has enough money to run on
- Financially accountable – has a proper system set up to track where all income comes from and where all expenditure goes. A simple spreadsheet is sufficient as long as there is a paper trail for each item.

Therefore make out a budget and keep all relevant paperwork and receipts from the word go.



You will obviously need to set up your own bank account unless you are part of a larger organisation. It can be very useful to have:

- Lodgement forms which document a breakdown of the source of all lodgements with relevant paperwork attached.
- Expense claim forms and clear policies for Volunteer expenses.

This system plus bank statements and cheque stubs makes it very easy for your accounts to be internally and externally audited. A Treasurer should be appointed as soon as possible to set up and oversee the budget planning and financial accountability. Below is a template for some of the basic items you might need to plan for in your budget. Some discussion might be needed on these e.g. some Befriending Services offer travel expenses to Volunteers and some do not. This may vary depending on resources and whether the service operates in a rural or urban area. Also it is good practice to issue Volunteer identity cards.

Budget Item	€
Phone and admin	
Coordinator’s travel & rate	
Volunteer’s travel if applicable	
Volunteer screening and Garda-vetting, including Volunteer Identity cards	
Stationery & Printing e.g. leaflets	
Office rent & electricity	
Computer	
Printer & ink supplies	
Postage	

1.9 Section 9: Organisational Profile

Now you are ready to fill out your Organisational profile which will really help you when applying for grants:

Name of organisation	
Year set up	
Aim/Mission Statement	
Services you provide	
Target Group	
Values and Principles	
Management Structure	
Staffing Structure or Key Roles	
Organisation you work in partnership with	
Main Income Sources	
<b>Tick if you have the following:</b>	
Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy	
Garda Vetting	
Data-protection Policy	
Confidentiality Policy	
Insurance	
Annual Budget	

1.10 Relevant ALONE Documents/Templates - See Part 4

- Template A - Befriending Coordinator’s Job Description
- Template B - Data-protection and Confidentiality Policy
- Volunteer Handbook (available at Training)

When all/most of the above is clear you are ready to Start Off so move to Part 2.....

**Aim of this section:** To establish the guidelines and procedures for running a quality Befriending Service for older people.

The content of this section is focused on a Befriending Service such as ALONE offers, but can be adapted for other types of Befriending Services e.g. telephone. Part 2 is divided into 3 sections:

1. Older People
2. Volunteers
3. Matching up Older People and Volunteers

2.1 Section 1 Older people

2.1.1 Key elements of the initial interaction with older people include

- Promoting the service to them
- Assessing the needs of the older person through an initial visit
- Screening the older person & liaising with relevant partners if appropriate

Below are a series of key steps that your group can work through to help plan these processes.

	Steps	Done
1	Clearly decide your target group and geographic area ( see exercise Section 1).	
2	Start a data-base of any older people within your target group that you already know who might be interested in a Befriending Service - or use the ALONE template data-base. Your data-base should be used as a log system for all future contacts.	
3	Develop your own an Assessment Form for assessing the needs of the older person or use the ALONE template. This should include an optional Health and Safety section.	
4	Trial the assessment form with at least 3 people.	
5	Assign at least two people to carry out assessments. They should also receive the ALONE Befriending Service Co-ordination Training.	
6	Organise contact phone number and email for your service and consider a website or Facebook page.	



7	Develop a leaflet advertising your Befriending Service and circulate it to your key partners list – see section 1.7.	
8	Ensure that the mobile phone, email and Facebook are regularly checked and responded to.	
9	Log all contacts and inquiries into the database within a set deadline e.g. 24 hours.	
10	Develop a Befriending Service leaflet aimed at older people which explains how the service works and what they can expect from it – or use the ALONE template.	
11	Organise Assessment visits for the older people who are within your target group .	
12	Develop a Support Plan file for each older person that receives an Assessment visit or use the ALONE Template.	
13	If you are referred, or contacted by, older people who are not within your target group, you can refer these to other Befriending Services (See ALONE Directory of Befriending Services) or to statutory/ voluntary organisations as appropriate (see Community Response in Part 3) and log this in your database.	
14	Ensure that your confidentiality and data-protection policies are known and respected by everyone who has access to information on older people.	
15	Promote your service and circulate leaflets more widely only if you feel you can meet the demand.	
16	Evaluate your service by checking in with the older people and volunteers regularly.	

2.1.2 Relevant ALONE Documents / Templates – See Part 4

- Template C - Promotional Leaflet
- Template D - Older Person Assessment Form
- Template E – Risk Assessment Form
- Database Template (available at training)
- Leaflet for Older People on Befriending Service (available at training)
- Template F – Older Person’s file headings



2.2 Section 2: Volunteers

2.2.1 Key elements of the initial interaction with potential Volunteers includes

- Recruitment
- Application process
- Interviews
- Garda-vetting
- Induction Training

Below are a series of key steps that your group can work through to help plan these processes:

Steps	Done
Discuss and plan what type of Volunteer you are aiming to recruit - What are the key qualities / skills you are looking for? How many you might need to recruit in the first 6 months – 1 year. Also discuss what would make a Volunteer unsuitable for working in your organisation.	
Discuss and plan how you will train volunteers e.g. whether you will do this yourself or use an organisation such as ALONE.	
Discuss if you will have a probation period for Volunteers. We recommend 3 months, followed by a review.	
Clarify all the screening steps for Volunteers applying e.g. application form, interview, Garda vetting, checking references, training and probation period	
Discuss and agree if you will be issuing Identity Cards to Volunteers	
Contact your local Volunteer Ireland Centre ( <a href="http://www.volunteer.ie">www.volunteer.ie</a> ) and ask them for help in recruiting volunteers	
Develop a Volunteer Recruitment Leaflet to advertise that you are looking for volunteers (see ALONE sample)	
Develop a Volunteer Application Form which all potential volunteers will fill in (or use ALONE template). There should also be a cover letter to go with Application form that includes an outline of the steps in the Volunteer Recruitment, Screening and Training process, including a probation period (see ALONE sample letter). Ensure there is also a closing date by which new volunteers must have applied.	





Develop a Volunteer Interview form (or use ALONE template), as all volunteers will need to be interviewed. Make sure you have clear criteria for approving or not approving a volunteer and that you gather all the information you need from the interview.	
Discuss how to register for Garda Vetting with your Local Volunteer Centre and get the relevant forms. Develop a letter for references.	
Plan a schedule for training your Volunteers or talk to ALONE about scheduling their Volunteer Training	
Set up a data-base for your Volunteers (or use the ALONE database template). Keep a log of all Volunteer applications and how they progress.	
Assign one or two people to take responsibility for Volunteer recruitment, screening and training and make sure they do the ALONE Befriending Service Co-ordination Training.	
Circulate your Volunteer Recruitment Leaflet e.g. local media and online.	
Interview potential volunteers within 1-2 weeks of the closing date for applications and let them know within a further week if they have been approved, subject to Garda Vetting and References, and when the date of the next training is. Not everyone is suitable to be a Befriending Volunteer, so If you are not approving a Volunteer, decide how you will deal with this in a manner that is appropriate.	
Have all approved volunteers fill out the Garda Vetting application and submit references.	
Check all References Organise Volunteer Induction Training, preferably with the support of ALONE or another organisation with expertise in Volunteer Befriending. See ALONE Induction Training Outline	
Clearly state that there is a 3 month probation period for all Volunteers from the start of their visits following which there will be a review with the Befriending Coordinator	
It is good to give everyone who has completed the Induction Training a Certificate of Completion from your organisation for their own personal records. This can be done at the end of the last night as an acknowledgement and celebration. Board members can be invited to this 'graduation' so that they get a chance to meet new Volunteers and vice-versa and have a cup of tea together - this creates good energy for moving forward.	
Organise and issue Identity Cards for approved Volunteers	



2.2.2 Relevant ALONE Documents / Templates - See Part 4

- Template G - Volunteer Recruitment Leaflet
- Template H - Volunteer Application Form
- Template I - Letter re Volunteer Application process
- Volunteer Interview form - available at Training
- Alone Garda Vetting Policy - available at Training
- Volunteer Garda Vetting Form - available at Training
- Letter for References for volunteers - available at Training
- Volunteer Data-base - available at Training
- Volunteer Induction Training Outline - available at Training
- Individual Volunteer File Template - available at Training

2.3 Section 3 : Matching up Older People and Volunteers

Once all of the above initial work with the older people and volunteers in done, matching the two together is relatively straight forward. Below is a checklist of key steps:

	Steps	Done
1	Look at obvious grounds for matching Volunteers and older people e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender preference</li><li>• Expectations of older person</li><li>• Geographic proximity</li><li>• Suitable times</li><li>• Common interests or experiences</li></ul> Trust if you have a good 'gut sense' around this.	
2	Once the Volunteer has completed Induction Training and Garda Vetting, organise the first visit. The Volunteer should be accompanied on their first visit by the Befriending Coordinator or buddy (see Part 3).	
3	After the second visit which the Volunteer will do on their own, check in with both the older person and the volunteer about how this went. If there were any issues, give support as appropriate and check in after the next few visits also. If there were no issues then check in after another month. If there are still issues after a month, discuss with both the older person and the volunteer about trying a different match.	

4	<p>After the 3 months probation period do a review with the Volunteer about how they are getting on. It is good to do this semi-formally instead of a casual chat to reflect the important role a Befriending Volunteer does.</p> <p>If there are any concerns about the suitability of this Volunteer, this is the time to address concerns and if necessary suggest that the volunteer may be better working in another organisation or another part of your organisation</p> <p>Do NOT leave Volunteers doing visits if they are unsuitable for the role – this is unfair to the older person and to them, and potentially can lead to major difficulties.</p>	
5	<p>Once a ‘match’ is working well, make it clear to both parties that they can contact you if any issues or queries arise. Check in on them 2 -3 times a year.</p> <p>These check-in calls or meetings should be logged in the data-base as part of overall quality monitoring</p>	

Once your Befriending Service is up and running smoothly it will probably start to grow and expand. That’s when you will need to plan for the ongoing management and co-ordination of your service which is dealt with in Part 3....

**The aim of Part 3:** This part of the Befriending Guide is aimed at more mature services that have been running for at least six months or a year. It deals with how to plan and manage the ongoing co-ordination of a Befriending Service once it is set up and starts to grow and develop.

This part is divided into 3 sections:

1. Planning and Communication
2. Ongoing Support and Management of Volunteers
3. Dealing with the Changing needs of Older People and Community Response

3.1 Section 1: Planning and Communication

Once a service is established and is running successfully, it will inevitably start to grow. When an organisation is small and there are only a small number of people involved in decision-making, then planning and communication can be quite informal. However when more people become involved, then the organisation starts to become more complex. This means it will need to adjust its planning and communication e.g. not everyone needs to be involved in every decision anymore, but it needs to be clear who has responsibility for what and who has the authority to make what decisions and how that gets communicated.

Often, when an organisation reaches this stage of growth, conflict can emerge because there is not enough clarity about decision making and communication structures. This can be easily avoided by good planning.

A good tool is a yearly plan where the management group and leaders of the organisation and develop an annual plan around the key elements of the Befriending Service. This could begin with a short evaluation exercise around the following questions:

- What’s working well?
- What’s not working well or needs to be improved?
- What have we learned in the last year?
- What should our priorities/goals be for the next year?

It is also important to include the older people in your yearly review and planning – this can be done through your volunteers as well as directly e.g. by a telephone service asking them for their views and ideas.

Following a discussion of all of the above information, the Management Committee should agree on four or five key goals for the next year and start to plan around these. As part of this planning you might decide to set up a subgroup structure around key goals. Below is an example of a yearly planning template:



Goal	Actions	By When	Who is Responsible
Promoting service	Develop and print more leaflets Develop a website		
Older People	Do a phone check-in survey to consult with older people Organise a Christmas Party		
Volunteer Recruitment and Training & Support	New volunteer recruitment drive Organise Volunteer Training Organise a ‘buddy system’ between old and new volunteers		
Finance and Fundraising	Finalise end of year accounts Organise a bag-pack fundraiser with local youth club		

This yearly plan should then be circulated within the organisation so that everyone is clear on the goals for the year and who they need to contact if they want to get involved in particular actions.

As far as possible, create sub-structures that encourage people to get involved as this builds good energy and ownership in the organisation.

**3.2 Section 2: Ongoing Support and Management of Volunteers**

As the number of Volunteers in your service grow, you will need to plan structures for their ongoing Support and Management. Some steps in this are outlined below under the following headings:

- Simple support structures – Buddying and Regular Volunteer Meetings
- Developing Volunteer Support and Management Structures: Task Subgroups, Mentoring and Volunteer Leadership
- Ongoing Training for Volunteers
- Thanking and Celebrating Volunteers

At some point, you may want or need to produce a Volunteer Handbook where the role and structures for Volunteers are clearly explained – See ALONE Volunteer Handbook as an example.



**3.2.1 Simple support structures – Buddying and Regular Volunteer Meetings**

*Buddying*

Once you have a small number of experienced volunteers, it can be useful to develop a buddy system where new volunteers can pair with them for at least the first few months. Always ask people if they want to buddy someone as this is an additional time commitment. Put a clear time-limit on it e.g. 6 months and clarify expectations e.g. new volunteer might accompany their buddy on a visit, or new volunteer might call their buddy once a week or a fortnight. Check on how buddying is going after one month.

*Volunteer Meetings*

It is also important to encourage your volunteers to network with each other by organising Volunteer Meetings several times a year where they can learn from, and support each other. However it is important that these meetings are well structured with clear ground rules including confidentiality. If volunteers are sharing about their experience with older people, this should be done with respect and sensitivity. Where they have a concern, they should focus on the issue rather than the individual and never engage in gossip. Meetings will probably be in the evenings and should be no more than two hours long. It’s always useful to start with a cup of tea and also have name badges if the group is big. Here are some ideas about how to structure meetings:

- Round of introductions to include any new volunteers
- Remind everyone of ground rules, especially the confidentiality of any information about individuals.
- Break up into pairs or threes to check how visits are going – what’s working well, any concerns or questions.
- Feedback the learning and any issues from the small groups to the bigger group.
- Reinforce the positive and what’s working well so that good ideas are shared.
- Discuss concerns identified by focusing on the issue e.g. dementia, alcohol, mental health, hygiene, physical disability, but not on a particular individual. Tap into the wisdom and experience of the whole group about what might work when dealing with such issues.
- Discuss if there is need for further information or training. If so, plan to invite someone with expertise in that area to give an input at the next Volunteer Meeting, or organise a specific training event that Volunteers can go to.
- Discuss possible events/social outings for the older people e.g. Christmas party and how this can be organised e.g. form a subgroup to manage it
- Have a short information slot on any relevant organisational issues e.g. fundraising events, publicity etc.
- Thank everyone for their time and contribution
- Finish with another tea if people want to continue networking



### **3.2.2 Developing Volunteer Support and Management Structures: Task Subgroups, Mentoring and Volunteer Leadership**

#### ***Task Subgroups***

As the work of your organisation expands and volunteer numbers grow, it can be necessary to create more developed support and management structures. Ongoing Subgroups can be useful to focus on planning a particular area or task e.g.

- Social events subgroup
- Assessment subgroup
- Care and Repair subgroup

It is useful to have a Chairperson for these subgroups, but membership should not be fixed as this can lead to 'cliques'. New volunteers should be welcomed and encouraged to take part in such subgroups – as well giving them a sense of belonging, they often bring new skills and fresh ideas! Encourage Chairs to rotate every year or two so that no area or person gets 'stuck.'

#### ***Mentoring***

If the Buddy system gets too unwieldy as the organisation grows, then you can create a Volunteer Mentoring structure, which is more formal. Mentoring allows experienced volunteers to play a key role in the support and management of all volunteers and especially those who are new. Each Mentor will have a number of volunteers e.g. 5-10 and there should be agreed guidelines for their role in supporting and managing those volunteers e.g. 1:1 contact or mentor group meetings. Mentoring needs to be planned well so that there is clarity about the role and structure and mentors should be given training on their role.

#### ***Volunteer Leadership***

As Volunteers are central to your Befriending Service it is important to develop their leadership and ensure the input into the wider management of the organisation. If the organisation is small and informal, you might organise one or two Volunteer representatives to attend the Management Committee meetings. These representatives could be elected once a year at a volunteer meeting. If the organisation is larger or more formal, you might create a Volunteer Leadership Subgroup where you can focus on more long-term planning that then feeds into management. Either way it is important that there is good communication between different levels of the organisation as it grows and that any structures that develop support this.

### **3.2.3 Ongoing Training for Volunteers**

Ongoing training should be part of the support and management of volunteers either on a formal or informal basis. This must include training on any new relevant legislation e.g. Vulnerable Adult's Protection.

#### ***Informal Training***

An example of training on an informal basis would be the Vulnerable Adult's Protection training mentioned above. Where a training need or information gap is identified at a Volunteer meeting and an expert is then invited to give input on this at a following meeting, or a once-off training session is organised to address that gap. Informal training can work very well, especially if the organisation is small.

#### ***Formal Training***

A more formal way to organise training is to do a Training Needs Assessment each year with Volunteers e.g. at a Volunteer Meeting and identify areas where training is required. This can then be organised into a yearly Training Plan with dates that everyone is made aware of well in advance. It is important that Volunteers realise that engagement in the formal or informal training process is required for ongoing quality, and therefore a mandatory level of engagement should be discussed and clarified e.g. attending a minimum of 50% of Volunteer Meetings or training events. You will need to decide what is the mandatory level appropriate for your organisation.

### **3.2.4. Thanking and Celebrating Volunteers**

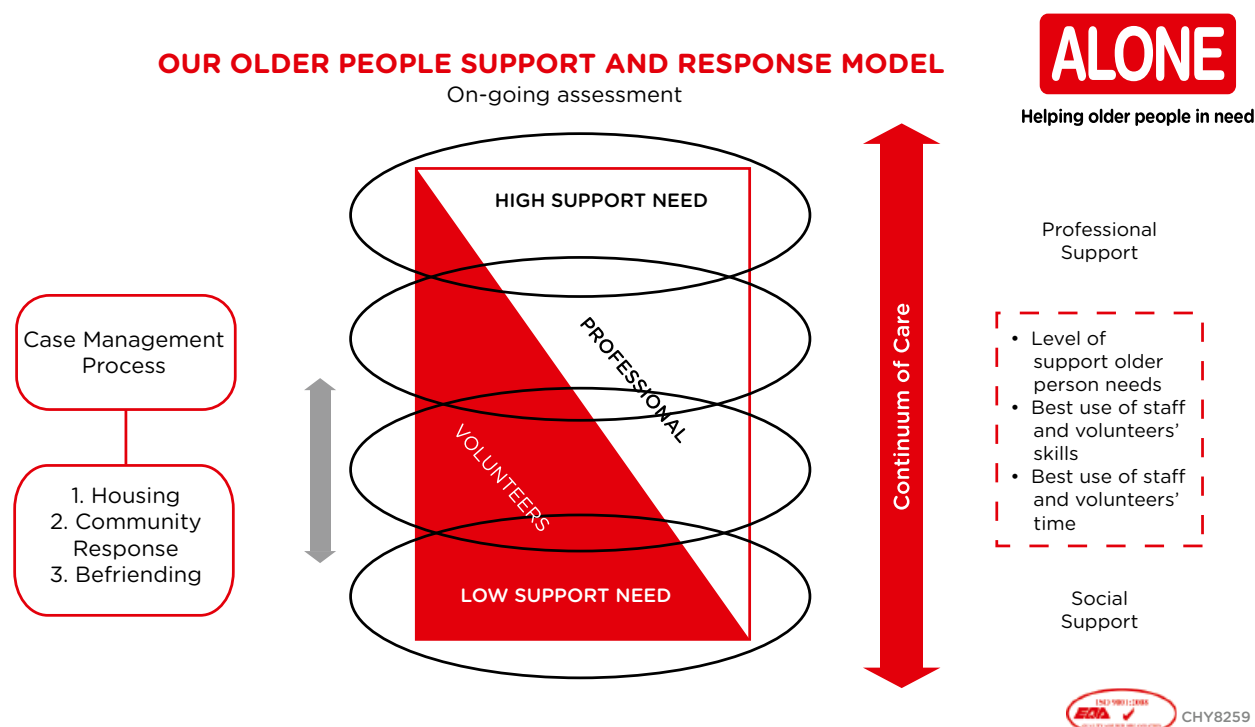
As well as managing volunteers to a high standard, it is also important to thank and celebrate the contribution they make from their own free time. This can be done in a number of ways e.g. public acknowledgement of volunteers at meetings and events, and also by text, newsletter and email; organising ways to celebrate volunteer contribution like fun events. Remember Volunteers are motivated by wanting to make a difference and also by wanting to belong so making sure your volunteers feel fulfilled and valued will spread the word that you are a great organisation to be part of.

## **3.3 Section 3 Dealing with the Changing needs of Older People and Community Response**

The longer your service continues, the more you will have to deal with the changing needs of the older people you work with which often become more complex with time. It is very important to stay in touch with the needs of the older people through your volunteer structures, but also through direct contact with the older people. As stated in Section 2, the Volunteer Coordinator should call the older person once or twice during the year to check in with them individually and as stated in this section older people should be consulted as part of a yearly review and planning for the service and invited to give their views on how the service can improve. As the older people you work age, their care needs are likely to increase. It is important to distinguish between providing companionship to older people on a voluntary basis and providing medical care which should be done on a professional basis.

10. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2000; 284: 2689-2695.

Below is a continuum of care model that ALONE uses which explains the need for a Befriending Service to work in partnership with other services and agencies so that the companionship and care needs of service users can be co-ordinated:



As indicated by the above Continuum of Care your Befriending Service will probably find over time that you will need to refer some of the older people onto statutory and community services. Certain protocols are good practice for this, the main one being a Case Management approach

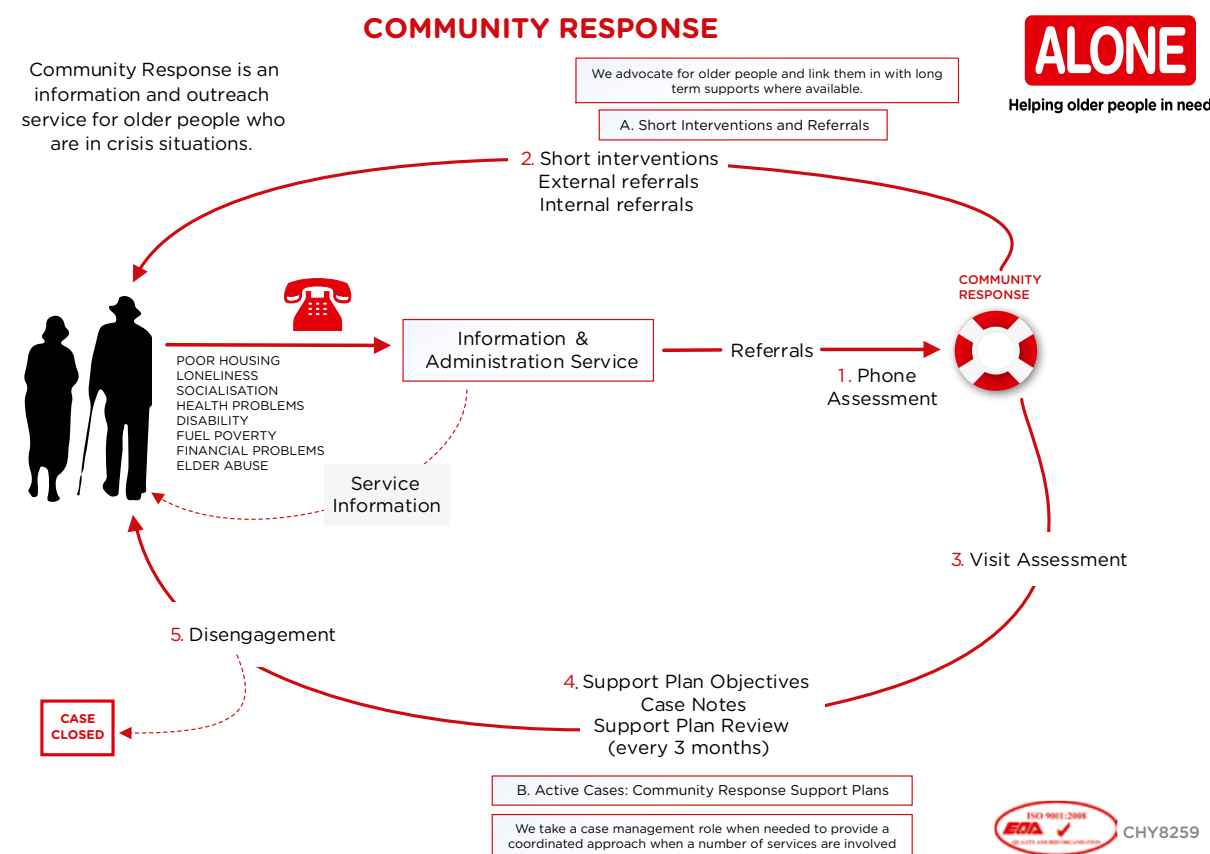
### 3.3.2 Case Management Approach

One definition of Case Management is a procedure to plan, seek, and monitor services for different social agencies and staff on behalf of a client. Usually one agency takes primary responsibility for the client and assigns a case manager, who coordinates services, and advocates for the client. The procedure allows many staff/volunteers in the agency, or in different agencies to coordinate their efforts to serve a given client through professional teamwork, thus expanding the range of needed services offered. A service may have to take this approach if there is not already a coordinated approach to an older persons care. Case Management Meetings are a way of pooling the knowledge, policies and procedures of your team. When new situations, gaps or blocks come up in cases, rather than one volunteer or team member struggling with a situation or an issue on their own, it can be discussed using the expertise across the team and external resources and information can be used when needed. There needs to be clear policies and procedures for Case management, including a Case Management file which records meetings held, decisions made and follow up actions. Policies and procedures will need to be regularly reviewed

1. *Journal of Management Studies*, 1996, 33, 1, 1-14.

### 3.3.3 Community Response

A Community Response Centre or Service provides an outreach service that advocates for older people in or at risk of crisis. Common issues faced include sub-standard housing conditions, poor health, financial difficulties, elder abuse and isolation. The Community Response team is professionally staffed and works in partnership with local authorities, state agencies, community and voluntary groups to achieve long-term, sustainable solutions using a Case Management Approach. Ideally all Befriending Services would be linked into a Community Response Centre for their region where they can get professional support for older people with high level care and support needs, as shown in the Continuum of Care above. ALONE already operates a Community Response service, but our vision is that nationally there would be at least 4 Regional Community Response centres that offer professional support and back-up to locally based Befriending Services, ensuring a joined-up continuum of care to deal with the changing needs of older people in need.



## Relevant ALONE Documents

- Mentoring role description - available at Training
- Case Management Forms - available at Training

## TEMPLATE A - Befriending Service Coordinator Role Description

### Sample Job Description for a Befriending Service Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities:

- To plan and organise the recruitment, selection and training of all volunteers.
- To plan and organise the advertising of the Befriending Service for Older People.
- To manage all the requests for older people for Befriending Service. Providing options to minimize delays.
- To organise Assessment Visits to older people, explaining the service to them.
- To organise matching of volunteers and older people and accompany them on first visit.
- To maintain/create links with all older people visited by ALONE.
- To support people who are visited by ALONE as appropriate.
- To develop referral options for older people who require extra supports to alternative internal or external services.
- Provide ongoing support for all Volunteers (new and existing), including probation interviews, and regular check-ins.
- To support and develop the volunteer networking and in-service training, through regular Volunteer meetings.
- To oversee the organization of any social events for older people.
- To ensure quality of service in line with key policies including data-protection, health and safety and protection of vulnerable older people.
- To develop good working relationships with key external stakeholders.
- To develop excellent systems for internal and external communications, including web-site if appropriate.
- To keep up-to-date statistics on service delivery.
- To establish and manage systems to ensure good financial accountability.
- To recruit and manage TUS workers and interns if appropriate.
- To oversee general admin work.
- To report regularly to the Board.
- To attend meetings as appropriate.



## TEMPLATE B - Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy

### Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy

**Purpose:** This procedure gives guidelines regarding the giving, receiving and handling of information in order to protect the privacy of older people who use ALONE services, volunteers and staff (incl. Interns).

**Responsibility:** All staff, volunteers, interns, temps, etc. within ALONE (the term staff & volunteers will be used in the remainder of the document, but this covers all who represent ALONE).

Data Protection Legislation: ALONE treats information it receives within the guidelines of the Data Protection Act 1988 & 2003. Data Protection is the means by which the privacy rights of individuals are safeguarded in relation to the processing of their personal data. The Data Protection Acts confer rights on individuals as well as placing responsibilities on those persons processing personal data.

The Eight Rules of Data Protection are:

1. Obtain and process information fairly
  2. Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes
  3. Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes
  4. Keep it safe and secure
  5. Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date
  6. Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive
  7. Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes
  8. Give a copy of his/her personal data to an individual, on request
- (See Data Protection Procedure)

**CONFIDENTIALITY** - Confidentiality is the protection of personal information and is an important aspect of our work. ALONE staff and volunteers have the ethical and legal obligation to adhere to the confidentiality of their colleagues and the older people whom we support.

However there are **limitations on confidentiality** and these need to be clear between staff, volunteers, interns and the older people who use ALONE services.

1. Confidentiality can never be absolute and absolute confidentiality should never be promised.
2. In order to properly support older people we work with, volunteers and staff, ALONE team members will have to share information about cases (such as in case management meetings and in supervision).
3. Information will be shared between staff, where required with the older person's volunteer and/or volunteer mentor, and potentially the ALONE Board.

4. This information will be shared with sensitivity and on a need-to-know basis.
5. Any information shared should be evidenced and factual.
6. Where there is a concern about the health, safety or general welfare of an individual there is a requirement for staff and volunteers to disclose information.

#### ALONE are obliged to break confidentiality where:

1. There is disclosure of criminal action or intent
2. Someone discloses the intention to harm themselves or others (this includes the threat of suicide)
3. We are made aware of any risk to children or vulnerable adults
4. We are directed to do so by court order.

#### How we Communicate Confidentiality:

- At Assessment Stage to New Referrals/Within the Residents Handbook/Befriending Booklet.
- For Volunteers it is outlined in the Volunteer Handbook & during the Volunteer Training.
- This procedure is available to any older person or ALONE volunteer upon request.

#### Volunteers

- Volunteer Meetings are a confidential space and all volunteers are expected to honour this confidentiality: 'What is said in the room should stay in the room'.
- Information regarding Volunteers details will be kept secure within the organisation and will only be shared with other staff or volunteers when there is a need.

[See Procedure: Volunteers in Case Management]

#### Meetings & Phone-calls

- All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that meetings/sensitive phone-calls with older persons who use our services/volunteers are private.

#### Storing of Information in ALONE:

- All files are kept on the ALONE CRM (Salesforce) and where hard copy documents on individuals exist (for example, legal documents), these are kept in locked cabinets.
- Salesforce the ALONE CRM is password/permissions protected.
- Other relevant computer files are password/permission protected.
- HR Files are kept by the CEO.
- Confidential records should not be left, either on paper or on screen, where they can be seen by unauthorised persons.
- Archived Files are boxed and locked in the store-rooms of WBP.

#### Requests for access to files:

- Individuals have a right to see information relating to them that is held on file.
- Requests for access to this information must be made in writing and state the reason for the request.

- The CEO should be informed of requests for access to a file.
- The information will be supplied to the individual within 40 days of receiving the request.
- Files will be available for inspection only in the presence of a staff member.
- The individual has the right to take copies of relevant documents.
- There will be restrictions to the above where references are made to other people / sensitive information regarding someone else (these should be blacked out).
- Restrictions will also apply where the sensitive information is about the person themselves, and this is designed to protect the individual from hearing anything about himself or herself which might cause serious harm to his or her physical or mental health or emotional well-being.

**CONSENT** – Consent is the means by which the older people we work with or volunteers can exercise control over the dissemination of their confidential information. Use or disclosure of person identifiable information is normally justified by the consent of the individual. Where possible no personal information will be collected or shared without the older person's consent. Consent (either a record of verbal or written) needs to be easily accessible in files.

#### Verbal Consent

- ALONE ensure older persons have given their permission to be referred to ALONE.
- In the majority of cases ALONE seek verbal consent only and this is recorded on the Individuals Assessment Form (on Salesforce) and where needed within Case Notes.
- ALONE seek verbal consent to talk to other people/services and to get information on the older person's behalf where this is deemed required.
- For Befriending Referrals at the Assessment Stage we request permission to talk with one other service already engaged with the older person.

#### Written Consent

- Will only be sought where other parties (3rd party) requires this from ALONE in order to work with us on a case or where the ALONE case worker deems written consent appropriate.
- For Hoarding Cases, consent will be sought before ALONE engage in any removal of goods from a person's home (See Procedure on Clearouts/Fumigating/Decluttering).

#### Sharing of Information with Third Parties (Inter-Agency Work)

- It is particularly important to check that the older people we work with understand what information will be shared with other organisations or agencies contributing to their care.
- If an older person does not want particular information being shared with others this will be complied with (exception – see Medical Emergencies below).

#### Medical Emergencies

- In cases of a medical emergency or where an older person lacks the capacity to give consent to treatment the staff member will provide all relevant information to care providers and medical professionals.
- If an older person refuses consent to share information about their condition or treatment and it is still considered essential, relevant information should be disclosed to the appropriate person or authority.

#### Disclosures without consent

- Staff should have regard to whether the disclosure is necessary, considered proportionate and if accompanied by any undue risks.
- In such cases, where possible, the older person will be told before any information is disclosed and should be informed of the reasons for the disclosure.
- Discussions with the older person and the reasons for deciding to disclose information should be documented in the individual's file.

#### Withdrawal of Consent

- Where an individual refuses to consent to a specific disclosure, withdraws consent or is incapable of giving consent, this should be documented in their case notes and assessment.

#### Disclosure after the death of an older person linked with ALONE services/ Older People who had previously used ALONE's Services (i.e. ex-residents).

The extent to which confidential information may be disclosed will depend on the circumstances. ALONE will still consider cases confidential after death. If there was a specific direction from the service user, any requests considered should take into account:

- whether the disclosure of information may cause distress to, or be of benefit to, the older person's partner or family.
- whether disclosure of information about the older person will in effect disclose information about the older person's family or other people.
- whether the information is already public knowledge or can be made anonymous.

#### Case Studies/Photographs/The Media

- See Photograph Procedure & Case Study Procedure (Media). Managed by the Communications Team.

**Additional Related Reference Documents:** Data Protection Procedure.





Helping older people in need



Helping older people in need

## TEMPLATE C - Promotional Leaflet

### Meet James

James was referred to ALONE by his Mental Health Worker. She described him as the most severely isolated person she had ever met. He had been living on his own since his sister died a few years previously and had totally disengaged from society. James was a lovely quiet gentleman and although his mental health problems were under control he had absolutely no social contact.

Since James has been matched with his ALONE volunteer he has made huge strides in re-engaging in society. They go for weekly outings to the local coffee shop and have long chats about classical music and literature. James also attends the ALONE Small Events and Cinema clubs every few weeks and is making new friends. He now looks forward to attending ALONE's Dinner Dances and is enjoying his life for the first time in years.



*"Since ALONE made contact with me my confidence is coming back. There is some purpose in the week."*  
Leo, Dublin

If you, or someone you know would benefit from this service please call us on 01 6791032, email [enquiries@alone.ie](mailto:enquiries@alone.ie) or write to us at ALONE, Olympic House, Pleasants St., Dublin 8.

To donate log on to [www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)



Helping older people in need

ALONE, Olympic House,  
Pleasants St., Dublin 8  
Phone: 01 679 1032  
[enquiries@alone.ie](mailto:enquiries@alone.ie)

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[www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)



ALONE is an independent charity. Registration Number CHY8259  
BefriendingDLRev40914



Befriending



Helping older people in need

ALONE's Befriending Services Promotional Leaflet  
Front and Back



Helping older people in need

ALONE is an independent charity that works with the 1 in 5 older people who are homeless, socially isolated, living in deprivation or in crisis.

We support hundreds of older people every week through our four main services

- SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
- BEFRIENDING
- COMMUNITY RESPONSE
- CAMPAIGNS FOR CHANGE

We receive no Government funding for our day-to-day activities so we rely solely on the generosity of the public to continue our work.

ALONE's services are delivered 365 days a year and we operate with a ratio of 1 staff member to every 18 volunteers.



Spring Dinner Dance

### What is the Befriending service?

ALONE's Befriending Service provides companionship for isolated older people. Loneliness is a serious health risk and a volunteer visit of just one hour a week can make a huge difference.

The purpose of the Befriending Service is to encourage greater social interaction, self confidence and where possible link people in with activities and supports in their own community. All ALONE volunteers are trained, Garda vetted and supported by experienced mentors.

### How does Befriending work?

- Volunteers visit the older person for an hour a week.
- Volunteers can support the older person to get out and about or enjoy a cup of tea and a chat in the home.
- Volunteers can also help with small practical supports such as shopping etc if needed.

ALONE volunteers are not home helps or care assistants. If an older person requires further support, the ALONE staff should be contacted for help in securing the correct services.

### What steps are involved in getting a Befriending Volunteer?

Contact is made with ALONE seeking a Befriending Volunteer.

- An ALONE case worker calls to the older person to carry out a full assessment.
- The Befriending Service is explained to them in detail.
- When a suitable volunteer becomes available the older person and volunteer will be introduced by a member of ALONE staff or an experienced volunteer.
- Once both the older person and volunteer are happy with the match they will arrange future visiting times between themselves.
- ALONE carries out regular check-ins to ensure visit is going well.

All volunteers receive training and are supported by the staff through a mentoring system.

### Events Programme

We also run a series of events, including small events, quarterly dinner dances and an annual summer holiday for the older people linked to ALONE.



Athlone Holiday

ALONE's Befriending Services Promotional Leaflet  
Inside

CHY8259

CHY8259





Helping older people in need



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TEMPLATE D - Old Person Assessment Form

Assessment Form

PRIORITY VISIT	
----------------	--

The purpose of this form is to identify support needs which will form your support plan and/or can be used to refer you on to appropriate services.

Do you understand that ALONE will be holding this information on file?

Date:

Name			
Address			
Phone			
DOB		PPS <sup>1</sup>	
Volunteer/s Assigned:	From/Until		
Nature & details of referral/ referrer			
Emergency and/or Next of kin Contact Details			
GP			
Medical Card <sup>2</sup>			

1 & 2 - This information is only sought where required e.g. benefits, grants and certain advocacy circumstances

Health Centre/CWO	
Accommodation type & condition or Former address; date moved into ALONE housing (resident)	
Consideration, requests of note (e.g. vision impairment)	

Relevant Background Information: (previous links to ALONE, where originally from, etc)

Personal Care: eating, washing, toileting, dressing, cooking, housework, shopping, etc

Physical Health/Mobility: current health, disability, recent hospitalisations, outpatients apts, medication need, mobility (inside and outside of the home), etc; <b>Note if smoker</b>



Helping older people in need

<b>Emotional and Mental Health:</b> mood, memory, cognition, medication, contact with mental health services, etc.

<b>Social Contact, Leisure/Cultural Activities:</b> family, extent and frequency of social contact, would client like to see more people/have volunteer contact, recreational activities, links to the community, etc <b>Note: if socially isolated resident as per HS model</b>

<b>Finance:</b> ability to budget, pay bills, is client in receipt of eligible allowances?, etc



Helping older people in need

<b>Housing:</b> accommodation, safety and security, need of alternative housing or adaption?, etc

<b>Other Needs:</b> Transport/Mobility, legal issues, information needed, anything not covered by previous headings.

Supports in place:		
Home Help	Care Assistant	Other:
Meals	PHN	

Volunteer Questions	
Agreeable to visit? Male or Female Volunteer? Suitable Days_____ Suitable Times_____ Interested in Socials _____ Other _____ Person's Interests: Has animals: Yes _____ No _____ What they would like from volunteer visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chat &amp; company in the house</li><li>• Opportunity to get out of the house - for walk/drive/go to a cafe</li><li>• Support with reading correspondence</li><li>• Support going to the shops</li><li>• Other</li></ul>	



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Personality/words to describe yourself:

Potential Risk Arising?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes proceed to Risk Assessment

Suitable for visitation

Yes ☐ No ☐

Relevant Details:

Pre-visit by Volunteer Co-ordinator required Yes ☐ No ☐

Befriending Service Handbook distributed and explained Yes ☐ No ☐ Initials:\_\_\_\_\_

First "Check In" completed by VC: Yes ☐ No ☐ Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Initials:\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Visitation

ALONE requires your permission to speak with at least one service that you are linked in with, for example, your GP, PHN, etc.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Feedback from Services Contacted:

Consent

In order to provide you with a full comprehensive service ALONE request that you give us your permission to contact other relevant services that are currently working with you, as needed. Any information provided will be used solely to assist us in developing necessary supports. If the answer given is no, this will effect the level of support that the ALONE organisation can give.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Support plan required  
Brief Intervention required.

	Involved Professional's Names	Service/Team	Role	Email	Tel
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

If you have any special wishes for the future relating to the end of your life, the ALONE organisation will attempt to ensure that your wishes are carried out. These can be recorded for you by a member of the ALONE staff team.

Assessed by:\_\_\_\_\_

Role in the organisation:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_



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TEMPLATE E - Risk Assessment Form

Risk Assessment Form

DETAILS

Family Name:

First Name:

Female ☐ Male ☐

D.O.B.

Tel:

Mob:

Address:

How long at current address?

Lives alone: Yes ☐ No ☐ If 'No' details of others in household:

SIGNIFICANT CONTACTS

Name of person closest to the service user/nominated contact:

In case of contact detail relationship to tenant:

Address:

Tel:

Mob:

Name of GP:

Address:

Tel:

Mob:

Persons identified as being at risk		Service User	Main Carer
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Members	Details:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Child/Children (Inform and liaise with child protection)	Details:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Member	Details:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Visiting Service Staff	Details:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other tenants/neighbours	Details:		
<input type="checkbox"/> General Public	Details:		

Physical Health/Function

☐ Unstable medical conditions

☐ Critical Episodes

☐ Multiple medical conditions

☐ Falls No. to date:\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Fracture(s) due to falls: No.\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Recent A&E visits

No. of hospital admissions in last 12 months:

☐ Sustained immobility

☐ Unsafe mobility

☐ Transferring/Manual Handling

☐ Visual Deterioration

☐ Auditory Deterioration

☐ Vocal Deterioration

☐ Swallowing Difficulties

☐ Urinary Incontinence

☐ Faecal Incontinence

☐ Pressure Sores

☐ Malnutrition

☐ Dehydration

☐ Hypothermia

Other:

Intervention/Action to Reduce Risk





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Mental Health		
<input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive Deterioration	<input type="checkbox"/> Disorientation time/place	<input type="checkbox"/> Delusions/Paranoia
<input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/> Depression	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Hallucination
<input type="checkbox"/> Short term memory loss	<input type="checkbox"/> Self harm/suicidal ideation	<input type="checkbox"/> Auditory Hallucination
<input type="checkbox"/> Long term memory loss	<input type="checkbox"/> Ideation of harm to others	Other
Intervention/Action to Reduce Risk		

Behaviour/Compliance		
<input type="checkbox"/> Serious Self-neglect	<input type="checkbox"/> Refusing access to service	<input type="checkbox"/> Threats to others
<input type="checkbox"/> Unable call emergency assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Failure to keep appointments	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical harm to others
<input type="checkbox"/> Wandering	<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Misuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Discontinuation of service	<input type="checkbox"/> Drug Misuse	
<input type="checkbox"/> Refusal of support/treatment	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe driving	
Intervention/Action to Reduce Risk		



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Medication		
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple/Complex medication	<input type="checkbox"/> Discontinued medication	<input type="checkbox"/> Recent hospital discharge with new medication
<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to self-administer	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-reviewed complex regime	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Forgetting to take medication	<input type="checkbox"/> Adverse side effects	
Intervention/Action to Reduce Risk		

Social & Carer Support		
<input type="checkbox"/> Social isolation	<input type="checkbox"/> Carer has deteriorating health	<input type="checkbox"/> Carer refusing support
<input type="checkbox"/> Lives alone	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakdown of carer support	<input type="checkbox"/> Recent victim of crime
<input type="checkbox"/> Recent bereavement	<input type="checkbox"/> Carer stressed/depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness
<input type="checkbox"/> Concern from relatives/friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Threat of carer withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Intervention/Action to Reduce Risk		



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Abuse		
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical	<input type="checkbox"/> Neglect	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial
<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychological	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/> Discriminatory	
Intervention/Action to Reduce Risk		

Home Environment		
<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate heating	<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic accident (appliances, gas.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Damp
<input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe for mobility/trip hazard	<input type="checkbox"/> Serious disrepair	<input type="checkbox"/> Insecure access
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire risk (smoking, electrical, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Serious insanitary condition	<input type="checkbox"/> No smoke alarm
	<input type="checkbox"/> Infestation	Other:
Intervention/Action to Reduce Risk		

Other Risk Factors			
1.	2.	3.	4.
Intervention/Action to Reduce Risk			



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RISK HISTORY SUMMARY
<i>Clearly outline recent events, crises and scenarios that illustrate identified risk indicators - including health issues, service refusals, serious harm, abuse, accident or neglect</i>

PROTECTIVE FACTORS
<i>Factors or circumstances that have protected the subject, or reduced the risk in the past (include here any change in the subject's ability to manage these risks)</i>

CONTINGENCY PLANNING
<i>List key areas that may re-occur/increase and actions required to manage this. Outline steps that will be taken if tenant discontinues services or treatment or withdraws from care plan e.g. follow-up call or visit, case conference, review, multi-agency communication, plans to re-engage service user</i>





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TEMPLATE F - Older Person File Headings

Communication, Capacity and Involvement
Comment on the tenant’s ability to make his/her own decisions about risk and to safeguard his/her own well-being:
Has there been a recent formal assessment of the tenant’s capacity?   Yes   No
<i>If ‘Yes’ detail outcomes in relation to identified areas of risk:</i>
Is a formal assessment of capacity required in relation to specific risks identified?   Yes   No
<i>If ‘Yes’ has this process been initiated?           Yes   No</i>

Assessed by:\_\_\_\_\_

Role in the organisation:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Older Person Individual Befriending File

Name of Service User:	
File Number:	
Referred by:	
Address:	
Date originally assessed:	
1st Befriending Volunteer assigned:	
Change of Volunteer and reasons:	
Day of regular visit/telephone call	
Log of visits/calls	
Record of check-in calls with date and outcome:	
Any special issues for Support – if yes please attach Special Support Plan	





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## TEMPLATE G - Volunteer Recruitment

### Volunteer Befrienders needed

Looking to do something worthwhile and enjoyable for 2014? Why not consider volunteering with ALONE as a Befriending Volunteer?

#### What is Befriending?

Befriending is a supported one-to-one relationship between a volunteer and an older person who has been referred to ALONE. The ALONE Befriending Service offers supportive, reliable relationships to older people who would otherwise be socially isolated. Befriending usually involves visiting the older person with whom you have been matched once a week for approximately an hour.

The Role of the Befriending Volunteer is:

- To befriend and provide companionship to the older person with whom they have been matched (visits are approximately one hour per week).
- To alleviate loneliness and isolation for the older person through visits.
- To provide practical support for the older person where necessary and appropriate such as collecting things, taking them shopping, taking them to appointments, helping with small tasks in the home. Volunteers are not substitutes for home-help or care assistants and should NOT take on the roles of these professionals.
- To support the older person you visit when attending ALONE social events.
- To support the older person to integrate into their community – such as informing them of local groups and initiatives for older people in the area. ALONE will support volunteers in accessing this information.
- To support the older person to pursue their goals – by simply giving positive encouragement if there is something the older person wants to do or get involved in and by helping the older person to access relevant information (such as carrying out internet searches).
- To act as an advocate for the older person where necessary (such as in relation to housing, health, personal safety, leisure and culture). This might simply mean making a call on behalf of an older person or helping them with an application form.
- To contact the ALONE office if the volunteer has concerns for the older persons health, safety and welfare.
- We do ask for a commitment of 1 year.

ALONE is there for older people who are;

- in crisis and need emergency support in their own home
- at risk of homelessness and need a place to live with some supports
- lonely and would like someone to visit them on a regular basis
- isolated and wish to meet other older people and participate in social events.



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## TEMPLATE H - Volunteer Application Form

### VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

#### ALONE BEFRIENDING SERVICE

APPLICANT NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Please complete the Application Form using BLOCK CAPITALS.

Please include two passport-sized photographs.

**Return the Application Form to:**

**ALONE Office,  
Olympic House, Pleasants Street  
Dublin 8**

*If you require any assistance in filling out this application form, please contact the ALONE office.*

#### For Office Use Only

Date Received:

Photos Included: Yes                  No

Garda Vetting Form Completed:                  Yes                  No

Referee Details Included (X2):                  Yes                  No

#### **SECTION 1: Personal Details**

(Use BLOCK CAPITALS)

First Name:    Surname:

Address:

Telephone Numbers:

Home:    Work:    Mobile:

Which number would you prefer to be contacted at?





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E-mail Address:

Gender: Male Female

Age Group: (information used to compile statistics on volunteer profile). Volunteers must be over 18 years of age.

18-25 26-40 40-55 56-70 70+

Nationality:

Work:

Are you:  
Full-time employed Working in the home Student  
Part-time employed Unemployed Retired

If employed, what is your occupation?

Are there other skills you could offer in a voluntary capacity to ALONE? (i.e. music, IT, DIY, etc):

Have you any medical condition or illness that might affect your work as a volunteer?

Yes No Detail:

Emergency Contact/Next-of-kin:

Name:  
Address:  
Tel:  
Relationship to you:

SECTION 2: Volunteering with ALONE

Briefly mention why you would like to be an ALONE volunteer:  
(Including what you would like to get out of the experience as a volunteer)

Have you previous experience of volunteer work? Yes No  
If yes, please give details:

Have you ever worked with Older People? Yes No  
If yes, please give details:

SECTION 3: Visitation Service  
As part of the visitation service, what geographic areas are you available to carry out visits in? :

What days of the week are you available to visit?:

Monday Friday  
Tuesday Saturday  
Wednesday Sunday  
Thursday

What time of the day is most suitable for you to visit?:

Mornings Afternoons Evenings

How did you hear about ALONE?

Word of Mouth Written Media Website  
Volunteer Centre Other:



Volunteer social events    Other, please state:

On receipt of your application form we will contact you.  
*Thank you for your interest in volunteering with ALONE.*



Warm regards,



**Helping older people in need**

ALONE, Olympic House, Pleasants St., Dublin 8  
Tel: 01 6791032  
[www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)



CHY8259

BefriendingGuidebookRev011114

