

More about Visiting Friends

Visiting Friends has been operating in Helensburgh and Lomond since 2013 and became a Scottish registered charity in 2018. Our befriending services are **free**, to any adult over 18.

We welcome **referrals** from individuals, families, third sector organisations and the health and social care partnership.

In order to make sure that we make the best befriending match possible, we take into account the preferences and availability of both our clients **and** volunteers. Because of this it can take a bit of time to find the right match.

We run **coffee mornings** and a bus trip each year for our Friends in addition to **social events** just for our Volunteers.

We welcome other support!

Please **refer** someone that might like a befriender – we just need their name, phone number and permission to call. We can also give you a leaflet to pass on or we can post one out directly.

You can **fundraise** for us with your own ideas, or via our website and the Argyll Community Lottery.

You might like to help us **organise** our coffees and events.

Or you can simply **spread the word** locally about our charity, **hand out** our leaflets or if you are a **local business**, please consider **displaying** our handy leaflet holders.

Thank you!

Phone 01436 269 336

Email jayne@visitingfriends.org
debbie@visitingfriends.org

Write Jayne Burnett, Manager
Debbie Beggs, Co-ordinator

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<https://www.argyllcommunitylottery.co.uk>

Visiting Friends is supported by
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Charitable Foundation
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Visiting Friends
Your local
befriending charity
across
Helensburgh & Lomond



Contact us on
01436 269 336

Ask for Debbie or Jayne

If you're feeling lonely

You're not alone! Feeling lonely is really common and affects people of **all** ages and backgrounds. If you're reading this leaflet perhaps you have been feeling lonely more often than usual.

At Visiting Friends **we understand the importance of friendship and staying connected.** We also know it might be difficult to have the confidence to join a group or make new friends especially if you are not able to get out and about on your own or are housebound due to a health condition.

Or perhaps you're new to the area or experiencing another change in your circumstances that has left you feeling that you'd like more social contact? That's where having a volunteer befriender might help.

Our Visiting Friends Volunteers can visit you **once a week**— at home, or go out with you for a cuppa etc. You would see the same volunteer each time so that you can get to know each other and build a friendship. **Our service is free.**

Our befrienders are male and female, of all ages and backgrounds. They undergo a criminal record check and are carefully chosen and trained by us.

Feeling lonely is nothing to be ashamed of!



We expect that you might have lots of questions about how to go about applying for a befriender for yourself or someone you know.

Please just get in touch with us for a friendly, no obligation chat - we can also send you more information.

All about loneliness

Loneliness is an **experience** — it's about how we **feel**.

Feeling lonely is not the same as being alone, and we can still feel lonely even if we're surrounded by people.

At times we happily enjoy our own company but loneliness can become a problem if we experience it more often than we would like — and if it goes unchecked it can adversely affect our physical and mental health.

We are biologically wired for social contact and loneliness is just a sign that we need more!

As we age we tend to have more of certain risk factors for loneliness such as: health and mobility issues, sensory impairment, being a carer or losing a loved one. But **feeling lonely affects younger people too!** For lots of reasons, time spent in person with friends is declining, and nowadays **younger adults** are just as likely to experience chronic loneliness - that's why our service is for everyone over 18.

But loneliness doesn't have to define us and there's no stigma here at VF!

We just need to talk more about it, so let's start a conversation about the changes we can all make to increase our meaningful connections with others.

Befriending is just one way of tackling and preventing loneliness. Here at Visiting Friends we're passionate about what we do. **We see first-hand the difference befriending has on everyone involved.**

It's a two-way thing!

The benefits of befriending go both ways

If you'd like to help

Over 18? - we'd love to hear from you! We're a friendly, sociable charity that appreciates that Volunteers are at the heart of what we do.

Maybe you're new to the area, retired or just want to do something that makes a difference? Whatever your reason, volunteering with us is a great way to meet new friends, build confidence and become more connected to your community.

As a **Visiting Friend** you would visit your friend once a week, normally an afternoon for a couple of hours, in their home or perhaps go out for a cuppa - you both decide!

Volunteers do not provide personal or medical care – we leave that to the experts!



Before we carefully match you with a new friend, we like to meet you in person and find out more about your preferences and availability. It's commonplace for our volunteers to have jobs and family commitments in addition to volunteering with us. We always take these into account when planning your match so that it works for you **and** your friend, and in turn, they have realistic expectations of your role.

If you decide to go ahead we ask you for two references and carry out a disclosure (criminal record) check as part of the government Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme - there is no cost to you for this.

We provide training and ongoing support to make sure you are safe and happy in your role.

Please get in touch to find out more!