



BEFRIENDER ROLE DESCRIPTION

Volunteer befrienders:

- Have a Christian faith, in agreement with our Statement of Faith, and are members of a local church
- Have parenting experience (including foster caring/step-parenting, adoptive parenting etc)
- Are friendly and non-judgemental
- Are happy to walk alongside a young mum without trying to interfere or offer unsolicited advice
- Are happy to work as part of a team, both within the Princess Project and with outside agencies, for example Early Help teams

The volunteer befriender will:

- Participate in initial training.
- Meet with an expectant or new mother at least once a fortnight, for an initial period of 6 months. This can be extended in 6 month stretches for up to 2 years in total.
- Take part in supervision meetings with the project leader at least 2-3 times a year
- Take part in team meetings/ongoing training approximately every 2 months.
- Complete review forms after each meeting with their befriender for monitoring and tracking purposes. One copy of these forms can be kept by the befriender for reference, and one will be retained by the Princess Project.
- Provide support and encouragement to their befriender, including praying and interceding for them regularly and seeking God's guidance with regards to the befriending relationship
- Be prepared to share their faith/talk about Jesus when invited to do so (see separate document 'Talking About Faith: Guidelines for Volunteers')
- Signpost them towards relevant services/other agencies, facilitating their involvement with these if necessary (for example accompanying a mum and baby to a first time mum's group; accompanying a pregnant young woman to an antenatal appointment)
- Inform the project manager at the earliest opportunity of any concerns they may have about their befriender, her child(ren), or the befriending relationship in general
- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Princess Project confidentiality policy.
- Report any concerns about the mum or her child(ren) in accordance with the Princess Project safeguarding policy.
- End the befriending relationship in a planned and positive way wherever possible.
- Participate in the evaluation of the scheme.

Financial considerations

- Any costs incurred in the course of the befriending relationship (for example buying a befriender a cup of coffee; car parking charges) can be claimed back from the Princess Project. Receipts should be obtained and kept for all such expenses, and they should be given to the project leader along with a completed Volunteer Expenses form.

- Befrienders should not buy any gifts or other items for their befriendees (with the exceptions of teas, coffees etc at a scheduled meeting as above). The Princess Project will provide funding for birthday presents, Christmas presents, Mother's Day gifts etc but this will be administered centrally to ensure fairness and consistency across the scheme. Any requests for specific gifts, urgently needed items etc should be made to the project leader.
- Befrienders should never lend their befriended money, no matter how small the amount involved.
- Whilst as a general rule we would advise against accepting gifts from a befriended, the Princess Project acknowledges that, for some individuals, giving to others can be a very important way of expressing themselves, and that denying people this opportunity may be detrimental to them, and the befriending relationship. We therefore leave it to the discretion of the befriender as to whether accepting a particular gift would be appropriate. If in any doubt please speak to the project leader.

Training

The Princess Project befriending programme has a comprehensive initial training programme that all mentors must successfully complete, before undertaking any befriending. The aim of the training is to give volunteers enough information to decide whether this particular ministry is the right one for them, and to equip and prepare them to begin a befriending relationship with a new mum. It is also an opportunity to get to know other volunteer befrienders, and to start to form relationships with them which will provide part of the ongoing support for befrienders. There are 8 sessions in total, which should all be completed. If any sessions are missed, it may be possible to 'catch up' on another occasion but it will be at the discretion of the project leader, and will depend on which session have been missed, as to whether the volunteer can start working as a befriender before her training record is complete.