

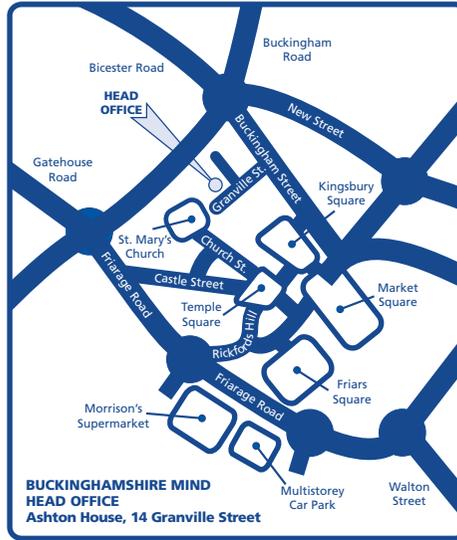
Befriending Service

Buckinghamshire Mind Befriending Service is based at Sun House in Chesham, but covers the whole of the county.

Get in touch and we will put you in contact with the Coordinator for your area.

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Buckinghamshire Mind is affiliated to national Mind and is quality assured under the Mind Quality Mark.

Buckinghamshire Mind (The Buckinghamshire Association For Mental Health) is a Registered Charity (No: 1103063) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (No: 5000185)

Large print version available



“My befriender has provided company and opportunity. I can see myself through someone else’s eyes and can check my thinking and whether my perceptions are reasonable.”

“I’m getting more confident and helping to improve things for myself.”



A Guide to Befriending
for Service Users

Befriending Service

What is the Befriending Service and who uses this service?

The Befriending Service is just one of a range of services offered by Buckinghamshire Mind. A successful trusting befriending partnership can encourage you to feel more confident about forming relationships in the future. If you are over 18 and experiencing mental health difficulties, befriending may be right for you.

What does a befriender do?

Volunteer befrienders and clients usually meet once a week for one to two hours for six months or a year. What you and your befriender do in that time depends on what you want from the partnership – so befriending can be based around a specific activity, learning a particular skill or simply there to give you regular social contact. We have befrienders who go walking together, knit together or just go for a cup of tea and a chat.

What happens after I have been referred to the Befriending Service?

Once we have received your Referral Form, a Befriending Coordinator will meet you to discuss what you need from us and how we can support you. You can ask questions about the service, and let us know of any concerns you may have. Your Coordinator will then find you a suitable volunteer and introduce you as soon as possible.

How long will I have to wait for a befriender?

This depends on the volunteers we have available. We need to make sure that we find the right befriender for you so we look for someone who shares your interests and is available to meet at a time and a place to suit you.

How will you protect my confidentiality?

Any information that you give us will be treated confidentially, and will not normally be passed on to any outside agency without your permission. However, if we become aware of any risk to your own or anyone else's safety, then it might be necessary to break confidentiality.

Will the befriender be able to understand my difficulties?

All our volunteers are given mental health awareness training, have a DBS check and have to provide two references. We only select volunteers who show they are capable of listening and understanding.

What happens when I meet my befriender?

When you first meet your befriender, your Coordinator will be there to introduce you to each other. You'll be able to arrange when and how often you want to meet, and discuss what you want to do in your time together. After this meeting, your Coordinator will contact you regularly to make sure your befriending partnership is going well. If you are not happy, please ring your Coordinator and we'll do what we can to help. If necessary, we'll try and find you another volunteer.

What happens at the end of a partnership?

When you start a befriending partnership, you will know that it will come to an end after a fixed amount of time (six months or a year). About six to eight weeks before your last meeting your volunteer and Befriending Coordinator will start to prepare you for the end of the partnership.

If I have a befriender, what do I need to know?

Please tell us if you no longer want to see your befriender. It is very important that you are not affected by alcohol or non-prescribed drugs whenever you meet your befriender.

Buckinghamshire Mind does not allow volunteers or staff to receive gifts. Please pay for your own expenses: your befriender cannot pay them for you.

It is not acceptable for you or your befriender to behave in ways which are racist or sexist or to show other forms of discrimination.

If either of you should complain of inappropriate behaviour, Buckinghamshire Mind will take action.

Please do not end the relationship by text or email. It is important for both you and your befriender to have as good an ending as possible.

About Buckinghamshire Mind

Buckinghamshire Mind is a charity working to support and represent people with mental health problems living across the county.

We deliver high quality community based services in Buckinghamshire to reach out and ensure everyone with a mental health problem gets access to the help they need.

We all have mental health and mental health problems are a part of life. Our services find positive ways to make people feel valued and live well. We support our service users to live safe, purposeful and fulfilled lives in their communities. We believe in their recovery and we are hopeful about their future.

We bring focused mental health expertise to our partnerships and the services we provide. We value working in partnership. In Buckinghamshire we know that bringing together different perspectives can help identify solutions to complex problems.

We support people in Buckinghamshire so they can be open about who they are, without worrying about discrimination, knowing they will be accepted.

Working with national Mind, we will not give up until everyone in the county with a mental health problem gets both support and respect.

National Mind

Buckinghamshire Mind is a 'Local Mind' which is affiliated to national Mind. Each local Mind is an independent charity run by local people, for local people. Each is responsible for its own funding and the services it provides, but all are affiliated to Mind. This affiliation ensures that each local organisation meets Mind's quality standards of governance and service delivery, and that they work to further our mission.

For more information on the link between Local Minds and national Mind please refer to www.mind.org.uk