

Silsden Helpline Chatterbox

Guidance for Volunteers

Welcome and thank you!

This guide should help you whilst you carry out your voluntary work with us.

Please take the time to read and understand the content thoroughly so that we can help people effectively and safely.

Thank you for joining us, we hope that by coming together we can keep our communities safe and comforted during this difficult time.

Let's start with some key information that will help protect you and the people you are supporting

Data Protection and Confidentiality

During your volunteering you may come across personal and sensitive information about individuals as part of the support you will offer. We want to make sure that all information stays safe and confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR Regulations 2018. We want you to treat other people's personal information in the same way you would want yours to be treated. If you do acquire information about an individual you may be supporting (for example, names, addresses and possible medical information), we ask that you maintain confidentiality and do not discuss or disclose any data or information with anyone, except your Chatterbox Supervisor, *outside of Silsden Helpline Chatterbox Service or with anyone who doesn't need to know.*

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep any data secure and treat other people's information in the same way you would want yours to be treated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss any information or data with anyone other than your Chatterbox supervisor. outside of the Chatterbox service, or with anyone who doesn't need to know.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">If you think there has been a mistake or breach of data protection tell your Chatterbox Supervisor about it so we can manage this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Leave any messages on answerphones with any personal information if you are not sure who is going to be able to hear them. Ensure others cannot hear you and avoid calls on loudspeaker if you live with others.

Equality

You will support a diverse range of individuals and we ask that you respect every individual's beliefs and that nobody is treated less favourably or excluded in anyway. We are all different and all have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. If you witness any behaviours where you feel someone is being treated less favourably or excluded, then

you must inform your Chatterbox supervisor of this immediately so we can tackle this and take appropriate action.

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat others the same way you would want to be treated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat anyone less favourably or exclude anyone who we are supporting in our communities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect everyone regardless of who they are, their backgrounds and the communities in which they live. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignore any unacceptable behaviours towards anyone, and ensure that you report it to your Silsden Chatterbox supervisor.

Safeguarding

We place the safeguarding and well-being of volunteers, employees and people we support above anything else. You may come across vulnerable adults or adults at risk of harm and they should never experience abuse of any kind. We want you to be alert to any signs or patterns of abuse or anything that may concern you and always raise your suspicions. Be assured you will always be supported and not raising your concerns is worse than raising a suspicion that is incorrect. If anyone tells you of any type of abuse then remain calm, listen and reassure them that it will be taken seriously. Don't promise confidentiality as you will need to speak to a limited number of people once you have this information. We ask that, in the first instance, you share the information only with your Chatterbox supervisor, who will advise you on whether you need to take any further action *and we ask that you ALWAYS report this to your Silsden Chatterbox Supervisor.*

Our Volunteer Agreement

We want to make your volunteering experience with us enjoyable, rewarding and safe. This below outlines what we can expect from each other whilst you volunteer with us.

You can expect us to provide you with:	As a volunteer we ask that you agree to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe, respectful, fair and nondiscriminatory volunteering environment. • A clear explanation of what your role involves, what is expected of you and who you need to speak to if you need support. • The ability to stop volunteering with us without pressure or judgement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability. • Be accountable for your actions. • Not accepting any gifts or monetary gifts from people you are supporting. • Respect and maintain confidentiality.

Acceptance and Agreement

I confirm that I have read and understood the requirements of the role/s for which I have applied to volunteer. I understand the boundaries and responsibilities associated with this role, and know of no reason that I am unable to safely and competently carry out these duties.

Chatterbox Information

Thank you for offering your time to provide telephone support to a person who is isolating. A phone call can make all the difference to someone who is lonely at this time.

Telephone support is a positive step to engage with people who may have little or no contact with others, a consequence of self-isolating may lead to issues with confidence, self-esteem, and loneliness.

The support you will be giving is a regular phone call that can be flexible to suit you and the time you have available to offer support, and also the time that the interaction takes place. The aim is to ensure that the wellbeing of the isolated person is taken into consideration and possibly identify any practical support they may require.

Hints and Tips

Calls should be made at times that are mutually convenient to both the isolating person and yourself.

1. It is important to uphold the confidentiality of the individual at all times. You may receive/hear personal information or details through conversations, forms or other means. All forms of personal information must be treated with respect and be handled in a highly confidential way.
2. We recommend calling from a landline number, unless you have free minutes available on a mobile phone and are willing to use these.
3. Ensure you with-hold your number by placing 141 before the number you are going to dial.
4. Think about how you safely store peoples contact details, do not leave these in a place that other people can access. If you keep names and phones numbers on your phone or other electronic devices these should be password protected and deleted once you have concluded your involvement with the Chatterbox Service.
5. There should be no need for you to keep paper records but if you do these should be locked away in a safe place and shredded in a confidential manner when your support has concluded.
6. During your conversation with the individual you may agree to increase/decrease the amount of times you contact them, ideally you should be in touch with them at least once a week.
7. The person you're supporting could be at risk of isolation for any reason, including cognitive difficulties or dementia. Be aware that when you have a conversation you may need to repeat yourself, revisit elements of the conversation or communicate more clearly than you may be used to in order to have a successful chat.

Getting Started

We recommend that you call the isolating person from a withheld number. To withhold your number on individual calls just dial 141 before the telephone number you want to call.

Introduce yourself and let person know that you are a volunteer who is supporting the Silsden Helpline Chatterbox Service. You are calling to check in with them to chat and make sure they are ok. The call should be a casual discussion to help lift spirits, boost morale and keep people engaged and talking, making them feel more connected to their local community.

It's difficult to pre-empt what types of questions you are likely to get from an individual, they may need some factual information or just some reassurance during these challenging times. Rest assured that there will be people available to support you if you are faced with a query that raises concerns.

If it becomes clear during the course of the conversation that the person requires some additional support such as shopping or prescription collection, take as much information as you can and pass this onto the Silsden Helpline on 01535 400150. You should not offer to undertake the task yourself as it may be more appropriate for another volunteer to do so. When you contact the Helpline let them know that you are part of the Chatterbox Service ringing on behalf of a resident.

Some questions to help the conversation

- How are you doing today? What is a typical day like for you? Do you enjoy reading watching TV? Are you managing to get around the house ok? Are you managing to prepare your meals?
- How are you feeling today? Do you have all the medication you need?
- Have you managed to speak to your family or friends? Are you able to get out to the garden for some fresh air?

Supporting a person living with Dementia?

Living with dementia at any time brings everyday challenges for the person and those around them. COVID-19 is making daily life much harder. People may feel anxious, scared or lonely. COVID-19 may mean that people affected by dementia are no longer able to take part in activities which supported them to live well, and their carers and families may be caring for them 24/7 with no respite.

It's important to note that dementia isn't a natural part of ageing and similar symptoms can be brought on by depression. Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain and doesn't just cause memory problems - it can affect anything and everything the brain controls, including mood and changes in behaviour. Dementia can make individuals forget details, but they will remember the feeling of reassurance and support provided by your call. This really will help to stop negative feelings caused by isolation.

If you are worried about the person you're supporting and their memory, or if they inform you they are struggling with their dementia or someone they care for with dementia, please call the Support Team. If you want more information about dementia, please visit www.alzheimers.org.uk

Supporting a person with poor mental health

You may find you are talking to someone who is living with poor mental health, 1 in 4 people experience mental health problems each year and a friendly chat can help individuals through this difficult time. You may not be aware of an individual's mental health and this may not even be discussed during your conversation. One of the amazing things you can offer as a Chatterbox volunteer is your listening skills and try to do this a non-judgmental manner.

Ask questions to gather information about how the person is feeling.

Ask open questions – What, where, when, why, how?

Show someone you understand by telling them (e.g. "I can see how that's been hard to deal with.") check you have understood and don't make judgements about what you're told.

Listen without interrupting and repeat what has been said to you.

You could suggest the below to promote Mental Health Wellness:

Try and stick to a routine, go to bed and wake up at the same time.

Try and get outside for some fresh air its amazing how much fresh air can do for your spirits.

Allow time throughout the day for self-care.

Reach out others, spend time speaking to friends and family.

Try and move around and stay active for approx 30 mins a day

Stay hydrated and eat well.

Potential Questions and Situations that may arise

[I'm concerned that I'm not going to see anyone for a long time.](#)

Recognise their concerns and let them know that you are here to listen them. It's ok to go outside if they have a garden and get some fresh air and they can exercise outside as well, keeping the 2 meter minimum distance.

[I need some practical help, I can't get to the shops or get my prescription.](#)

Contact the Silsden Helpline 01535 400150 let them know you are a Chatterbox volunteer and provide them with the information they require.

[I've been told to stay at home but I always go to the community centre on a Wednesday, can I still go?](#)

If you have been told to stay at home we recommend you follow the guidance from the NHS. Community centres are closed at this time. You can still go out in your garden if you have one and for exercise only, you must keep 2 metres away from any other people.

[I like talking to you, can you call me again next week?](#)

That's lovely to hear, when would you like me to call you next week? (Make arrangements to suit you both)

[Can I take down your phone number, so I can call you if I need anything?](#)

Establish what they mean by 'need anything' i.e. is this practical support we can offer then this should be done through the Silsden Helpline on 01535 400 150. Politely tell the individual that you are not permitted to give out your personal contact details.

[I'm lonely and I don't have anyone I can call.](#)

Ask who they would usually talk to/spend time with and see if they can contact any of these people via phone, it may be that they would benefit from more than one call per week but that is entirely at your judgement and should only be offered if you are prepared to do so.

[I'm worried about my neighbour, can you call them if I give you their number?](#)

Take their neighbours details and pass them onto your Chatterbox Service Supervisor.

I'm feeling very sad/depressed/hopeless, I think I need some help.

Talk to them to understand their needs, Do they need practical support we could see if there is a volunteer available to do this through the Helpline, alternatively they could call their GP or 111.

Supervision and Reporting

You will be allocated a Chatterbox supervisor who will be your contact during the period of your volunteering. If you have any questions or concerns at anytime you should contact them.

Once a week you will need to complete a short form for any phone calls you have made. This will help us to collate information and monitor how busy the service has been and the demand from local people. This form can be completed online or you can phone your supervisor with the information.

If you can no longer complete the phone calls for whatever reason or the resident tells you they no longer want to receive the calls please let your supervisor know.

We will try to share the calls out amongst all the volunteers but you may be asked to ring more than one resident, this will be your choice and you can request not to take on any additional work.

Thank you for supporting Silsden Chatterbox.