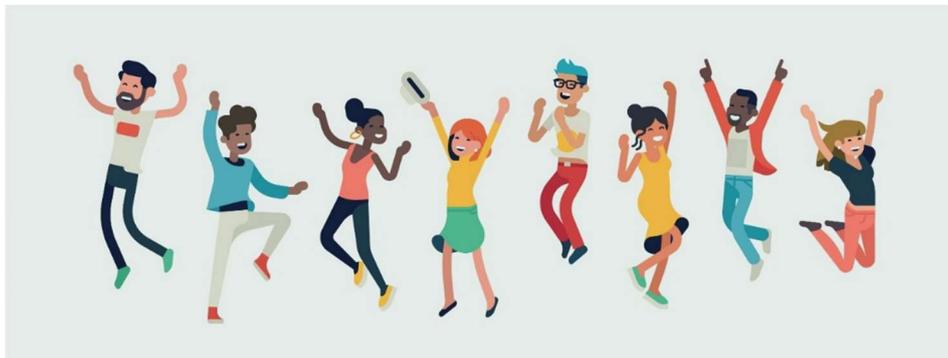




Space Age Connections

CONNECTING . EMPOWERING



Connector Information Pack

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1. Connector Role Profile

Objectives of the Role

We would like our volunteers to offer companionship, dependable support and friendship to help older people with dementia feel less isolated and lonely and to encourage them to become more involved in their local community.

Our Aim

We are looking for dedicated volunteers (Connectors) who can give between 1 & 2 hours a week to support older people (Buddies) with dementia who are at risk of social isolation.

This role gives you the opportunity to help people in a way that you are passionate about, visiting an older person in their home, to engage them in conversation and supporting them to be more socially active.

Description of Project

This unique wraparound service has been designed to complement our established day care service for people with dementia, The Beacon Club which has been operating for over 25 years, to be inclusive of people over 60, living in the South West of Edinburgh. With the help of our Connectors we want to offer companionship, reliable support and the opportunity to be more socially connected.

We are looking for people over 18 who can commit to being a Volunteer Connector for at least 6 months who we will then match up with an elderly person (Buddy) with hopefully some shared interest.

What's involved?

- Help older people feel less lonely by providing companionship and conversation in their homes on an agreed date/time;
- Where appropriate, refer and signpost an older person to other organisations and agencies that may support their health and well-being;
- Encourage older people to attend social groups e.g. coffee mornings or one-off events, if they feel they would like to;
- Any other reasonable activities aimed at enhancing an older person's quality of life; and
- Complete and return monthly visit sheets and feedback to the project coordinator.



You will not be required to provide personal care (e.g. feeding, washing) or give direct medical advice to participants .

What knowledge do I need?

As a Connector, we ask that you:

- Have good listening and communication skills;
- Have an interest in and empathy with older people;
- Can provide non-judgemental support and encouragement to people in difficult situations;
- Are able to respect confidentiality even in difficult situations; and
- Are honest, reliable, committed and flexible to meet your Buddy's needs.

What can I gain from this role?

We know that individuals volunteer for a number of different reasons and that the benefits will depend on personal circumstances however the following are recognised as some of the potential benefits:

- A greater awareness of services and activities in your local area;
- Training and support in areas such as active listening, understanding the barriers to social isolation and appropriate signposting;
- Opportunity to meet new people and use and develop your skills; and
- Improving your health and well-being.

Training

You will receive full training and support to help you to improve your confidence and understanding for this role. You will be required to complete mandatory training before you begin your role. This will cover areas such as dementia awareness, boundaries, confidentiality and safeguarding.

Support

You will be supported by a dedicated member of staff who will ensure that your training and development needs are met, and provide ongoing support as needed.

Expenses

We will refund you for any reasonable expenses, such as travel and activity costs.

Working practices

We ask that volunteers become familiar with Space & Broomhouse Hub's policies and procedures as described in the Volunteer's Handbook. The tasks and activities above listed are intended as a summary and may be varied from time to time in consultation with the volunteer concerned. The role description is intended to clarify the tasks and activities of the volunteer and is for the benefit of all concerned. It does not form the basis of a contract of employment.

Why Volunteer with us?

Volunteers are so important to us here at the Space & Broomhouse Hub and allow us to provide our services to many people in our local community who would not benefit otherwise.

We really value the contribution of our volunteers and are committed to making sure that your experience volunteering with us is a positive one!



2. Connector FAQs

This section intends to answer any additional frequently asked questions (FAQs) that you may have about becoming a volunteer with us however please contact us if there is any further information we can provide to you.

1. What can I expect when I volunteer?

As a Connector with Space Age Connections, you can expect to have a clearly defined and much valued role within our organisation. You will have a dedicated Connections Coordinator who will provide you with training, information and ongoing support and will help to ensure that your experience volunteering is a positive one. We will respect you, ensure your voice and opinions are heard and greatly appreciate your contribution to delivering our service.

2. How does the application process work?

Our Connector Information Form is intended on being an informal way of getting to know you a little better. We want to make sure that the volunteering opportunity will fit with your needs and ensure it is a positive experience for you. Getting to know you better also helps us to match you, where we can, with a Buddy of similar interests.

When we have received your form we will call you to arrange to meet for an informal chat. This lets us tell you any further information we think might be useful for you to know and gives you an opportunity to ask any questions you may have for us.

3. If I don't have experience working with people living with dementia, can I still apply?

You don't need to have any specialist skills or qualifications for the role. We look for qualities in our volunteers that we think will help build connections with our Buddies such as:

- Reliability;
- Ability to relate to and empathise with people;
- Good interpersonal and communication skills;
- Good listening skills; and
- Be non-judgemental, patient, understanding, positive, supportive and flexible.

We will also provide you with training including dementia awareness to ensure you feel confident and equipped for your role.

4. What documents will be needed before starting my role?

As you will be working with vulnerable members of the community, you will need to apply for a PVG. Don't worry as we will help you complete the application. You will need to show two forms of I.D. as part of the application process.

We also ask that you provide details of two people who can act as character references for you. However we understand that circumstances may not always support this and we can be flexible where required. Please just let us know and we can support you to identify suitable people.

5. Do I need to complete a criminal record check?

Yes. As our service involves you working with vulnerable adults you are required to become a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme which includes a criminal record check. We'll support your application to the scheme and it will be arranged by us. We just need some of your personal details and will take care of the rest!

Having a previous conviction does not automatically prevent you from volunteering with us but will allow us to discuss with you whether the opportunity you have applied for is the most suitable. If you have a unspent criminal conviction, you will be asked to request and complete a Criminal Conviction Self Declaration form. We will be happy to assist you in completion of this form and all of your personal information will be treated confidentially. You are also required to tell us if you acquire a criminal conviction of any sort while you are volunteering with us.

6. How long will it be until my volunteering starts?

Following our chat and assuming we collectively decide that the role of Connector is the opportunity for you, then we will look to match you with a Buddy as soon as we possibly can. We will need to work around any COVID restrictions and also availability of Buddies looking for a match at that time. Time to process disclosure checks will also factor into this as a match cannot be made until these are completed. However, we will aim to keep you informed throughout the whole process so you are aware of progress.

7. How much time will be needed from me?

We ask our Connectors to commit to a minimum of 6 months volunteering with us. This is to allow us to offer continuity of service to our Buddy's which is particularly important for individuals living with dementia. We will require 1 or 2 hours of your time each week on an arranged day that you are available. Visit duration, location and time will depend on what is agreed with your Buddy and will be discussed with you and agreed at the time of matching.

We ask all of our Connectors to complete a feedback form on a monthly basis which should take 20 minutes maximum of your time. This allows us to check in with how the connection is going, the wellbeing of the Buddy, if the risk assessment has changed in any way and if you need any support.

Beyond the initial mandatory training, any additional training and arranged meet-ups with other Connectors will be attended if you choose to and there is no specific requirement to attend. We will aim to give as much notice of planned events as possible to give everyone the best opportunity to attend.

8. Will I receive training and support?

Yes, we commit to providing you with the training required to equip you in your role ensuring you can do this confidently and safely and always feel supported.

We will always be contactable should you require advice or support regarding your Buddy and your visits to them. We will also provide guidance in the form of visit plans and relevant policy documents.

9. Can I volunteer if I am claiming benefits?

Yes you can. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) agree with us that volunteering is a worthwhile experience and recognise that it can have a positive impact for those seeking work or experiencing ill health. Please make sure that you advise your contact person at the DWP of your volunteering activity.

10. Will I be paid?

As you will be volunteering your time with us you will not be paid. However, we will ensure you don't lose out financially through volunteering by covering any out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel between your home and where you volunteer. You should submit any claims (and copies of receipts) in line with the expenses policy which will be explained to you.

11. How will you keep in touch with me?

We can discuss and agree with you how you would like to be contacted on an on-going basis however we would like to catch up regularly if possible to make sure everything is going well and to offer you any support if needed. This could take the form of a phone-call or face-to-face meeting depending on what is most suitable.

Initially we would like to have catch-ups more regularly to support your connection and make sure it is working for both you and your Buddy.

You can contact your Connections Coordinator at any time outwith these planned catch-ups as required. We will require you to contact your Coordinator at the end of each visit, so we know you are safe, via a quick text message or phone call.

We will arrange opportunities for wider group catch-ups that you can attend if you choose to do so.

12. What do I do in the event of an emergency?

- If you or your Buddy are at immediate threat or danger, contact the emergency services on 999.
- Contact your Connections Coordinator immediately to let them know about the situation. If they are unavailable, please contact reception at Space & The Broomhouse Hub.

- If you feel threatened or unsafe at any time, leave the situation with immediate effect.

13. What about my personal safety?

As you will be visiting your Buddy on your own, it will be your responsibility to ensure you do not enter or stay in situations that risk your personal safety. This includes not partaking in activities that cause a risk of injury or entering or staying in environments that are hostile and / or unsafe.

A risk assessment will be completed by the Connections Coordinator during initial meetings with the Buddy. If you notice any changes to this assessment or notice any risks at all during your volunteering activity, please report these to your Connections Coordinator immediately.

Make sure that someone knows where you are going and when they should expect you to return and that your mobile phone is charged, is capable of making outgoing calls and is accessible to you at all times. We will require you to contact your Coordinator at the end of each visit, so we know you are safe, via a quick text message or phone call.

14. Do you store my personal information?

We treat all your personal information as confidential and store this securely. Paper copies of documents are stored securely on site, are accessed only by authorised staff and are kept in a locked location. Electronic copies are stored on a secure network, are password protected and only able to be access by authorised staff. You can request to see the information we store about you at any time.

If you do not decide to join us as a volunteer, any personal information we have stored with be destroyed / deleted confidentially after one month.

At the end of your time volunteering with us, information required to be able to provide you with a reference will be kept for one year, with any other data being destroyed / deleted confidentially. All records can be destroyed at your request on the understanding that a reference will not be able to be provided thereafter.

15. Can I take holidays?

Absolutely! We would never discourage you from taking holidays and breaks. What we would ask of you is that you give us as much notice as you can so we can ensure your Buddy and their primary carer are aware of any times where you may not be able to visit and make any necessary arrangements.

16. Will I be insured?

Yes, this is covered by the Space & Broomhouse Hub. Volunteers will be covered by appropriate insurance in terms of employers and public liability in respect of performance of their role. Please refer to the Space & Broomhouse Hub Volunteer Policy.

Connector's wishing to use their own transport with their Buddy's during their visit should speak to their Connections Coordinator to check whether this is permitted. If so, proof of adequate insurance will need to be provided and will be kept on file. You should also let your insurer know that you are using your vehicle for voluntary work.

17. Will I be able to request a reference?

Yes, after you have been volunteering with us for a while we can provide a written reference. This can be requested up to one year after your time volunteering with us and assuming you have given permission for your details to be held by us for this period of time. Please note that this will be a reference with only factual information.

18. Can I give feedback?

Yes, we encourage and support feedback as it helps to shape our service and support you. We will reach out to you for feedback regularly but would also encourage you to also contact your Connections Coordinator at any time.

19. What happens if I change my mind?

Although we ask for a minimum commitment upfront, we appreciate that individuals' personal situations can change over time. Please speak to your Connection's Coordinator who will support you with any questions you may have and will help to manage the ending of a Connection and your time in the role.

3. Statements from Policies and Procedures – Volunteers

Outlined below are some of the key policies and procedures that relate to volunteers undertaking the role of a Connector for Space Age Connections:

a) Equal Opportunities

SPACE oversees a variety of services in the Broomhouse Centre, each of which is funded to support specific groups of people.

SPACE is committed to these being high quality services which fully reflect the diversity of the community they serve, and is committed to Equal Opportunities. In addition SPACE will strive to ensure that this policy of non-discrimination is reflected in all aspects of the life of the Broomhouse Hub.

b) Recruiting ex-Offenders

When recruiting staff or volunteers, SPACE wishes to treat all applicants fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against an applicant on the grounds of any information revealed, including information concerning convictions.

c) Volunteers

SPACE wishes to involve volunteers to contribute to the delivery of its services and to bring to the services a refreshing variety of skills and experience in order to enhance their quality.

SPACE wishes to offer opportunities for participation through volunteering to people who might otherwise be excluded and, through them, to increase contact with the community it serves.

SPACE recognises and values the important part volunteers play in its work.

d) Protecting Vulnerable People

SPACE aims, through the operation of the Hub and its services, to attract, support, and empower children, young people and vulnerable adults in order to contribute towards meeting their personal, social, and health needs. SPACE values the contribution which such vulnerable people make towards the Hub and its services and is fully committed to safeguarding their welfare.

Staff, volunteers, Hub and service users should at all times show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and should conduct themselves in a way which reflects SPACE principles and values.

e) Information Protection and Open Access

All personal information kept by SPACE as an employer and by the services run under its auspices will be obtained, stored, used, disclosed and eventually destroyed lawfully and with due regard for the rights of the individuals to whom the information refers.

f) Data Protection

By entering into a volunteering role you consent to SCDC holding and processing data relating to you for legal, personnel, administrative and management purposes and in particular to the processing of any sensitive personal data (as defined in the Data Protection Act 1998)

Thank you for considering volunteering with Space Age Connections.

We can't wait to deliver this important new service with the help of our brilliant volunteers!

Important Contact Details

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79-89 Broomhouse Crescent,
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Connector Coordinators

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