

# Telephone Friend

## Volunteer Role Profile & FAQs

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### **Overall purpose of role:**

To provide a consistent and reliable 30-minute weekly telephone friendship call to an older person, encouraging and enabling them to become more confident and less lonely and isolated through your friendship and support. Crucially as a Telephone Friend you will have the ability to have fun and to engage in conversation with an older person on a mutual basis, building trust and confidence and sharing your experiences with The Silver Line so that we can improve the service we provide to older people.

### **Time commitment:**

We ask our volunteers to commit to a 30-minute friendship call each week for a minimum of a year wherever possible. You will have an opportunity to discuss your availability as part of your volunteer interview, including your ability to commit more time if desired.

### **Requirements of role:**

You will need access to the internet, an email account and a telephone to become a Telephone Friend. If you have a disability that may require specialist equipment or support, please highlight this on your application in question 2 and we will discuss this at your interview.

### **Main areas of responsibility:**

- Make calls to your assigned older person/s at the time and day agreed by you and The Silver Line.
- Complete the interview and training required by your volunteer role.
- Agree to a Disclosure and Barring Service check if required, and provide two references.
- Undertake a 3-month probationary period.
- Comply with The Silver Line's IT and other record-keeping policies.
- Where possible, give the Volunteering Team advanced notice of any absence.
- Report any problems or concerns to the Volunteering Team.
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of The Silver Line service.
- Develop and maintain appropriate boundaries of confidentiality with other volunteers, colleagues and older people.
- From time to time, complete further training as necessary to support you and your volunteering role.

## **Boundaries of the role:**

As a volunteer – for both your own safety and the safety of older people – it is important that you keep within clearly defined boundaries of your role. Some important points to remember:

- Do respect older people's confidentiality by not discussing them with friends, family or other volunteers. You should only discuss their details with the Volunteering Team.
- Do not give out your personal contact details. It is very important that you remain in control of your own volunteering. Giving out your personal contact details could lead to the older person contacting you at inappropriate times, which could be awkward for you and is not appropriate to this service.
- You must not accept or agree to accept any offer of gifts or services offered by members, their family or relatives, suppliers, distributors, or any person having similar connections to The Silver Line. Under no circumstances are volunteers to become party to being involved in the making of an older person's will. If you are called upon to provide support in this respect, refer to the Volunteering team for advice on the appropriate course of action.
- Do not offer to visit older people at home – even if they should live within a close travelling distance – as this is not permissible under the boundaries of The Silver Line.

## **FAQs:**

### **How old do I have to be to volunteer?**

To volunteer for The Silver Line you must be a minimum of 18 years of age. There is no upper age limit.

### **How long do I have to volunteer for?**

We ask for a minimum one-year commitment in order to ensure continuity to the older people we support.

### **How much time do I have to commit to each week?**

We ask our volunteers to commit to a 30-minute call each week, however for many volunteers their commitment can be between 1-4 hours if they speak to more than one person. The most important thing to remember is that volunteering is something you freely commit to and you will have the opportunity to discuss your availability as part of your volunteer interview.

### **When am I able to make my friendship call?**

Friendship calls can be made on any day of the week from 8am to 8pm. You must be able to commit to calling once a week, on the same day and time agreed at the outset and this will be for as long as both parties wish to continue making/receiving calls. We will discuss the times you are available to call in more detail at the interview stage.

### **How many people will I support?**

Our volunteers speak to between 1 and 4 (as they choose) people on a weekly basis by making regular friendship calls at a pre-arranged time.

### **What is the recruitment process?**

For all roles, volunteers will be expected to complete an application form, undertake an interview, submit two references, complete training and undertake a DBS check (as required by role).

### **Where will my interview take place?**

Interviews will normally take place on the telephone and last for approximately 20-30 minutes.

### **What training will I receive?**

Training for this role will take place on a group telephone conference call and lasts for 90-minutes.

### **What support will I receive?**

As a volunteer you will receive on-going support and advice from the Volunteering Team.

### **Will I get paid expenses?**

The Silver Line will reimburse reasonable expenses in accordance with our expense policy. As a Telephone Friend all calls are paid for by The Silver Line.

### **Will there be a probationary period?**

All Silver Line volunteers will undertake a 3-month probationary period. This enables both ourselves and our volunteers to ensure that the volunteering experience is of benefit to all parties involved.

## **Can I make my weekly friendship call from abroad?**

No, unfortunately the international call costs are too high for us to be able to facilitate volunteer calls from overseas.

## **What if I regularly go away for extended periods of time?**

Please ensure this is something you raise with us during your interview, where we will be able to assess on an individual basis whether this is something we would be able to facilitate.

## **Volunteer person specification:**

### **Knowledge/understanding**

- A genuine desire to support older people. (E)
- An ability to deliver to and reflect The Silver Line values. (E)
- An appreciation of issues facing older people (i.e. isolation). (D)
- An understanding of the need for older person confidentiality. (E)
- An understanding of the need to maintain safe working boundaries when working with older people. (E)

### **Skills/abilities**

- Warmth, understanding, sensitivity and a willingness to listen. (E)
- The ability to be supportive and non-judgemental regardless of a person's age, race, sexuality, religion or disability. (E)
- A flexible and understanding approach to working with older people whose needs may vary or change over time. (E)
- To be willing to learn from your own and others' experiences. (E)
- Basic IT skills and access to the internet from your own home. (E)
- An ability to communicate. (E)
- A commitment to empowering and enabling others. (E)

### **Other**

- To be able to make a regular commitment for a minimum of 1 year. (D)
- A sense of humor and the ability to enjoy and share conversation. (D)
- Willingness to undertake further training and supervision as and when requested. (E)
- A commitment and an adherence to The Silver Line's Equality and Diversity policy. (E)

**(E) = Essential requirements / (D) = Desirable requirements**