



**BUDDIES  
FOR ALL**

# **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**



Changing lives. One connection at a time.

[www.buddiesforall.org.uk](http://www.buddiesforall.org.uk)

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# **ABOUT BUDDIES FOR ALL CIC**

Buddies for All CIC is a buddying service launched in 2021 that connects adults who are deaf and disabled with volunteer Buddies. Through online, telephone, and face-to-face support, we create lasting friendships that reduce social isolation, improve well-being, and help individuals engage more fully with their community. Our service is led by disabled people and prioritises inclusivity, accessibility, and meaningful connections.

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## **Our vision**

A world where everyone, regardless of their disability, has the opportunity to build meaningful, supportive, and lasting connections, empowering them to overcome daily challenges and lead fulfilling lives.

## **Our mission**

To enhance the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of disabled people by connecting them with compassionate Buddies who offer support, friendship, and access to community activities. We strive to reduce loneliness, alleviate social isolation, and foster a sense of belonging through telephone, online and face-to-face interactions.

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## **About the Buddying Programme**

The purpose of Buddies for All's Buddying Programme is to connect disabled people with volunteer buddies to overcome social isolation.

# WHAT BUDDIES FOR ALL OFFERS



Buddies for All provides flexible support to disabled individuals through both telephone and video platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet, allowing users to access the service in their preferred way. In addition, Buddies offer face-to-face, in-person assistance for those who want help participating in local community activities, such as attending sporting or cultural events, with a volunteer companion.

Buddies and beneficiaries are paired based on shared interests and preferences, fostering meaningful relationships.

Social activities vary and can include going for walks, coffee, concerts, theatre, sports events, cinema, dining out, pub visits, shopping, attending classes, going to museums or galleries, gym sessions, or nights out. The list is not exhaustive, as activities are mutually decided between the disabled person and their buddy.



# **WHAT BUDDIES FOR ALL DOES NOT OFFER**

Buddies for All does not provide services such as care assistance, including support with personal care like toileting at home or in the community, nor does it offer a home visiting service, except for picking up and dropping off with prior written agreement.

The organisation is not a personal assistant service and does not assist with personal care or household tasks. Additionally, Buddies for All does not offer personal escort services, such as driving clients to medical appointments or activities unrelated to social or leisure pursuits. It is not a support worker service, meaning buddies do not assist clients in voluntary or paid work, nor do they offer guidance on NHS prescriptions.

The organisation also does not provide advocacy support, such as sending emails or written correspondence on behalf of clients, nor is it a dating service. Importantly, Buddies for All does not support illegal activities, including the use of recreational drugs to manage conditions.

The service is strictly focused on social and leisure activities, and it does not assist with hospital appointments or non-leisure activities. If a client attends an event with a companion ticket, it is assumed this ticket will be allocated to the buddy, allowing them to attend at no cost, subject to the event's terms and conditions.

# THE ROLE OF A BUDDY

A buddy will primarily provide companionship and mental stimulation to enhance the well-being of the client.

Volunteers are not there to replace professional carers or do domestic duties.

The Buddies for All programme is delivered in the following ways:

1. Telephone
2. Online video chat
3. Messaging
4. Face to Face support

## **Code of conduct**

Buddies for All volunteers are expected to uphold the same values as staff. You should make yourself familiar with the following policies and procedures:

- Volunteer recruitment procedure
- Volunteer code of conduct
- Health & safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Insurance cover
- Complaints procedure
- Boundaries
- Equality policy
- Role description(s)

These policies and procedures are available on our **website**.



## **EXPECTATIONS: FROM BUDDIES FOR ALL**

- You can expect us to value and respect you while ensuring you have the support you need during your time with us.
- We will introduce you to your supervisor, who will provide guidance and feedback, and ensure you understand your role and how to perform it.
- We will offer training and support as you learn and prioritise your safety while volunteering.
- We will discuss the Buddies for All programme and your role in it, recognise your contributions, and encourage you to make new friends through volunteering.
- From the first point of contact, you will receive a polite, friendly, professional response, and if we cannot address your inquiry immediately, we will follow up within 24 working hours.
- Your inquiry will remain confidential unless it falls under Adult Safeguarding Procedures.
- We strive to answer your questions thoroughly and will only refer you to another agency with your consent for further advice.
- During out-of-hours periods, an answering machine will take your message, and we will respond on the next working day.



- If you need an appointment with Buddies for All, we will aim to meet at your convenience and will arrange a date and time, providing any necessary document instructions beforehand.
- If a home visit is needed, our staff will show their identity card and inform you if they are running late.

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## **EXPECTATIONS: FROM VOLUNTEER BUDDIES**

- We expect you to be a part of Buddies for All, understand our mission, values, and behave accordingly.
- Treat everyone with respect, consideration, and appreciation, regardless of who they are or where they come from.
- If something is unclear, ask for clarification. Participate in any required training and meetings relevant to your role.
- Maintain professionalism and safety while volunteering and adhere to your role description at all times.
- Communicate openly with us about your progress and give advance notice for any holidays or planned time away from your regular commitment.



- Remember that all adults working or volunteering with disabled individuals and those with additional health needs hold a position of significant trust, and your conduct must always reflect our commitment to acting in the best interest of those we support.

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## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Please treat our staff and clients with dignity and respect, and be as honest as possible when providing information, as this helps us offer the most accurate advice and support.
- If you have any comments or suggestions, feel free to share them with a staff member or via email, as we rely on your feedback to maintain a quality service.
- At Buddies for All, we want all volunteers to enjoy their experience, so if any problems or concerns arise, please speak to your volunteering Lead promptly so they can be addressed before they escalate into larger issues.
- We are committed to actively listening and responding to any concerns, comments, or complaints.
- If we notice any issues with how you are fulfilling your role, we will discuss it with you as soon as possible.
- It is essential that while volunteering, you adhere to Buddies for All's core procedures to ensure that volunteering remains safe, legal, and consistent with our overall work.

# BUDDY SESSIONS

## Types of activities

As a volunteer you will be expected to participate in the following activities with a disabled person:

- Telephone chats
- Online video chat
- Online messaging
- Face to Face support

## Structure of sessions

As a buddy, you're expected to support a disabled person for at least 30 minutes weekly via phone or online (Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet) for four weeks.

After this, you'll meet with your volunteering lead to discuss progress and decide whether to continue with the same buddy (potentially meeting in person), switch buddies, support an additional buddy, or end your involvement with Buddies for All.

If extended beyond four weeks, in-person activities like walks or coffee are encouraged.

After 12 weeks, Buddies for All's support ends, and further visits will be at your own risk.

Post-12 weeks, you'll meet with your lead to explore future volunteering options.

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## **The matching process and the first visit**

As part of your introduction to Buddies for All, we ask questions about your hobbies and interests; we ask the same questions to our potential clients. We aim to match like-minded people, and we also must look at the location of volunteers and clients.

## **Managing endings**

Each client is assessed every 4 weeks. This is to ensure that the service and surroundings are still suitable for both client and volunteer. Our service is available for our clients for a period of 12 weeks. This is to prevent attachments being formed. Please refer to our [\*\*managing endings policy\*\*](#) for more information on how to sensitively manage an ending with your buddy.

## **Health and safety**

As a buddy, you'll often visit clients alone, so be mindful of security. Always assess the area for safety. If you have concerns on the day, it's okay to address them. If inside a venue, stay aware of exits and consider sitting near the door.

While emergencies are rare, it's important to stay prepared. Keep essential items like keys and your phone in your pockets for quick access and avoid bringing anything you can't leave behind if needed.

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Regarding fire safety, if a fire occurs, leave the premises immediately, even if it means leaving the client while you call for help.

Personal safety is also critical; Buddies for All is responsible for ensuring both you and the client are safe. If you ever feel unsafe or uncomfortable in a client's home, leave immediately and contact the Volunteer Coordinator or a senior staff member.

Never ignore your instincts or place yourself in danger, avoid situations that may lead to physical injury, always be aware of the nearest exit, and inform family members of your whereabouts when applicable.

## **Emergency situations**

We hope that you won't encounter an emergency with the client but if you do, it's essential for you, as the person on the spot, to provide as much accurate information as possible to support the staff and ensure the safety of our clients and volunteers.

Follow these emergency procedures for confidence and effective action.

- If a client does not answer the door whilst picking them up from their home, follow these steps: ring the doorbell multiple times, knock loudly, rattle the letterbox, shout through it or a window (if on the ground floor), and try any rear entrance.

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- If no response, call David from Buddies for All at 0779 1129 856 to report the situation so we can ring the client.
- Ask yourself: Are the curtains drawn? Are any lights on? Are there newspapers in the letterbox or milk outside? Do you hear any noise or smell gas?
- Check with a neighbour about the person's wellbeing and their last sighting. If we cannot locate the person, a staff member will contact next of kin, their GP, and hospitals, and if necessary, the Police will be called to force entry.
- If the person has fallen, do not attempt to lift them; call an ambulance and inform Buddies for All immediately.
- If they are taken ill, with their consent, contact their GP or dial NHS 111.

## Telephone numbers

You must never give out your home, work, or mobile telephone numbers to clients. If your buddy needs to contact you, this should be done through your Buddy Coordinator.

## Support

The Buddy Coordinator holds regular group sessions for you to come along and meet other buddies and have further training or guest speakers. This is also an opportunity to speak about any queries you may have.

Our buddy co-ordinator will be your main contact, helping you with any queries and providing continuing support. Any concerns you have can be discussed at any time over the phone, or we can arrange a face-to-face meeting.



# BUDDIES FOR ALL

We hope you will enjoy your time with us and if you have any issues or concerns, please speak to your Buddy Coordinator. They can offer support and advice and can help resolve the problem for you.

If you're not comfortable talking to them, then please contact the CEO via email at [david@buddiesforall.org.uk](mailto:david@buddiesforall.org.uk)



Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Buddies for All. We'd love you to tell your friends and family about your volunteering and the work of Buddies for All.



[www.buddiesforall.org.uk](http://www.buddiesforall.org.uk)



[david@buddiesforall.org.uk](mailto:david@buddiesforall.org.uk)

# Buddying Agreement

*Please complete your separate Buddying Agreement document and send to Buddies for All - this is for your records only.*

This agreement outlines the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for volunteers. Our goal is to ensure a positive experience for everyone, and we are committed to providing the necessary support to make this partnership successful. We greatly value the time, experience, and dedication of our volunteers.

## Buddies for All Responsibilities:

- Regular communication with both buddies.
- Provide introductions, information, and guidance.
- Offer induction training for the role.
- Ongoing support, supervision, and reviews.
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures.
- Listen to feedback from both parties.
- Safeguard personal data in compliance with GDPR.

## Volunteer Buddy Responsibilities:

- Complete agreed tasks.
- Be punctual and provide notice if unavailable.
- Attend support and review sessions.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Uphold organisational values.
- Raise concerns with staff promptly.
- Follow reporting procedures and policies.
- Keep personal information confidential.