

Amesbury Area board - Age UK Salisbury Befriending Grant update.

In January 2011 we recruited an Amesbury area befriending volunteer co-ordinator. We then started marketing the project by leafleting, written articles and talks. Organisations we approached were:

- GP Surgeries
- Women's institute
- Parish magazines
- Various open days
- Avon Valley News
- Good Neighbour Scheme
- Amesbury Library
- Amesbury Carnival

This resulted in a number of volunteers and clients presenting themselves. Volunteers are processed via an application, references and an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check. If the CRB disclosure is satisfactory the volunteer is invited in for an organisation induction and then matched and introduced to a client. The volunteer processing typically takes at least 4 weeks.

In the meantime, clients (if they are able or willing) are placed on the telephone befriending list where they receive Social calls once a week.

Before a befriending match is made with a client, we visit them in their home and carry out an assessment. We are assessing that the client's needs are appropriate for the service and if the client is in receipt of any due benefits. We also provide the client with information on other support that is available through ourselves or other providers. We explain the befriending service in greater detail and where possible establish goals i.e. attend a local day centre or join a local group. The ultimate goal, to support the client to re-engage with the community.

Client / Volunteer numbers to 30th June 2011

	Volunteers	Clients
Applications	13	19
Processed 30/06/11	9	16
Receiving Social Calls		5
Volunteers delivering befriending visits	8	
Clients receiving befriending visits		12

If practice this means 12 previously lonely and isolated clients are already receiving regular visits from their new befriender.

We set an ambitious target to provide befriending to 30 clients in the Community Area by the end of the first year. Given the delay built into the volunteering process by the CRB checks we are pleased with progress to date and feel we well positioned to achieve this goal.