

## What is a Community Friend?

A community friend is a trained volunteer who supports someone experiencing homelessness.

## What does Community Friends achieve?

Community Friends gives people experiencing homelessness the chance to form a relationship with someone who can be a positive influence in their life. By giving them the chance to take part in social activities with that person they can

- Improve their involvement in their community
- Get some respite from their problems
- Increase their confidence and motivation
- Set goals and look to the future
- Be signposted to relevant support services
- Break harmful behaviour patterns

## Who benefits from Community Friends?



Anyone currently in the East Ayrshire local authority area can be referred to Community Friends. Anyone presenting as homeless will be referred to the project by the Local Authority Housing Options section. The Development Officer will then contact them and invite them to take part.

Volunteer befrienders can live in any area provided they are willing to travel to take part in social activities with their befriender. They will receive training, be matched with a suitable person and be supported as the relationship develops

## What commitment is needed?

Volunteers taking part in the project will initially receive background information and an application pack.



If they are suitable candidates, they will be invited to attend training sessions to give them the necessary information about fostering a good befriending relationship, including company policies, health and safety information and setting boundaries.

On the successful conclusion of the training, volunteers will be matched with a suitable befriender using a profiling questionnaire which will identify areas of common interest, shared experiences, relevant skills and availability.

An initial session will give the participants a chance to meet, and if both parties agree, this will mark the beginning of the relationship. The next meeting will normally be supervised by the Development Officer, and then if both parties are comfortable, the relationship will continue, usually once a fortnight for around two hours.



There will also be ongoing training and social events which will give the opportunities for befrienders to share good practice and befrienders to see how others are progressing. It is anticipated that the relationship will last approximately one year.



## How Can I Find Out More?

**Contact** Gillian Anderson  
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**or visit** [www.community-friends.org.uk](http://www.community-friends.org.uk)

# Community & Friends

Community Friends is a partnership between

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*Supporting people experiencing  
homelessness in East Ayrshire*