

Aim: To provide peer support via telephone or other remote forms of communication (e.g. text, email, video calling, etc) for those struggling with their mental health and social isolation. Beacon is initially being set up in response to the Coronavirus crisis, but The Lighthouse plan to continue this as a permanent service.

Contact details:

Service coordinator (& safeguarding officer): **Maddy Iddon**

Email: **maddy@thelighthousecmhh.org**

(usually checked daily. There may be a 24-48hr delay before receiving a response)

Phone/Text/WhatsApp: **07307618914** (Please note that this is not a helpline. Please call only in an emergency. Otherwise, please use text, WhatsApp or email and we will get back to you)

Am I eligible?

If you are struggling with your mental health, are over 18 and live in the South Lakes area you are eligible to be referred/self-refer for befriending support from Beacon. Referrals will be triaged to ensure those most vulnerable receive timely support.

What should I expect if I am referred/self-refer.

Step 1: The service co-ordinator will receive your referral by email, and send acknowledgment of receipt to the referrer.

Step 2: Within 14 days from receipt of your referral the service coordinator will contact you to discuss your needs and what you would like to get out of the befriending service. This will include how you would like to have contact (e.g. phonecalls/text/video/a mix) and how often you would like this (see boundaries). The service coordinator will also discuss with you the client agreement which includes a code of conduct, plus confidentiality, safeguarding and boundaries (see below).

Step 3: The service coordinator will then match you with one of our lovely volunteer befrienders. This will be based on personalities, hobbies and interests, your needs and the volunteers skills and availability.

Step 4: Once we have found a suitable match the service coordinator will chat to the befriender about what you would like from the befriending relationship and share any relevant information from your referral. (please see confidentiality information below). If there is any information you do not wish to be passed to your befriender, this can be discussed during your chat with the service coordinator (in step 2)

Step 5: The service coordinator will then share with you relevant information about your matched befriender, and organise a time for your first contact with your befriender.

Step 6: You will have your first contact with your befriender! We understand that this could make you feel anxious. It is the befrienders role to lead the contact, and importantly to listen to you and your feelings, or whatever else you may wish to talk about. Equally, you may not feel up to talking. It is ok to tell your befriender this. You may want to just have a short contact, or rearrange for a different day/time – this is ok. We all want you to get the most out of the service, and we will be as flexible as we can within the boundaries of the service.

*NB: After your first one or two contacts with your befriender, the service coordinator will contact you to see how it's going and make sure you are happy with the service. Importantly, **you can contact the service coordinator at any point in the duration of the service if you have any concerns, queries, or positive experiences related to the service.***

Duration of service: In general, Beacon befriending relationships will be a minimum of 3 months and no longer than 12 months. Initially the service will run for the duration of the Coronavirus crisis, and for a time afterwards to help you get back into social settings. For example, you may be encouraged and supported to attend the Lighthouse's peer support drop-ins, but this will always be your decision.

However, this will be reviewed case by case in light of the coronavirus crisis, your needs and volunteers circumstances. For example, some clients may feel they no longer need the service once they are no longer socially isolated, whereas others may need the service for longer than 12 months.

Beacon remote befriending service will therefore continue as a permanent service for those clients who cannot attend drop-ins, etc. and will continue to need remote befriending post-coronavirus. We also aim to set up a face to face befriending service once this is possible, so many of our clients and volunteers may wish to switch to this service when able. It may be possible that your befriender will need to stop volunteering before you are ready. In this situation we will ensure you continue to receive support while a new befriender is matched to you.

Boundaries

Boundaries are in place for Beacon to protect both the volunteer and client.

Boundaries set by The Lighthouse

1. **The minimum expected contact from your befriender is one hour per week.** If you wish to make any changes or would like more than this, talk to your befriender, or if you would prefer, the service coordinator.
2. The timings for contact are set out with your befriender and by the service coordinator. However, we do stipulate that you **do not make contact between 8pm and 8am**. This is because if support is needed from any of the leaders or service coordinator, we cannot guarantee our availability. If you would prefer an 'out of hours' time, please discuss this with the service coordinator. Currently, weekends are fine, and we aim to keep it this way.
3. **Befrienders are not to give out any personal details** such as address, etc. They will only share the phone or digital contact methods agreed with you. There is no expectation for befrienders to share their phone number. You will not be asked for your address by your befriender, unless in the case of an emergency. If you need other support which requires this information, such as delivery of essentials, your befriender will signpost you to another organisation which provides this type of support.
4. **Do not add/accept friend requests from your befriender on social media.**
5. **Do not physically meet face to face.** The Beacon service is for remote befriending only. In the future The Lighthouse aims to develop a 1:1 face to face befriending service, which will require further training and boundaries etc.

Boundaries that will be set between you and your befriender:

1. **Frequency and duration of contact.** Although we recommend starting with a 1 hour phone call a week, you may wish to add to this as the relationship progresses. Befrienders cannot make any promises to you regarding increased contact. They will discuss any desired changes with their team leader or the service coordinator, and we can re-negotiate the volunteer-client contract.
2. **Sharing other contact details.** Your befriender may have initially agreed not to share any of their contact details, but as the relationship progresses, they may change your mind. Again, they will discuss the desired changes with their team leader or the service coordinator, and we can re-negotiate your volunteer-client contract.
3. **Timings of contact.** This will be especially relevant if your befriender allows you to contact them. The 8pm-8am rule applies here too, and your befriender may suggest days and times when they are available, or how long it may take for them to respond. For example, they may say that you can expect a reply to a text within 24 hours or to an email, within 2 days, etc. They might say that you can call them if you want, but only on certain days or certain times.

Client's Code of Conduct

1. Be respectful towards your befriender.
2. Respect boundaries and confidentiality.
3. Do not use violent, bullying, abusive or sexual behaviour, language or innuendos.
4. Do not get involved in gossip.
5. Not partake in the use of alcohol or drugs before or during contact.
6. Do not accept or give gifts or money.
7. Inform the service coordinator of any concerns/accidents/incidents.

Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Confidentiality is incredibly important to The Lighthouse and the Beacon service.

Information will only be passed outside of The Lighthouse if:

1. Express permission is given by the member (client).
2. There is a safeguarding issue. (see Safeguarding Crib Sheet and Safeguarding policy)
3. There is a statutory obligation to do so. (see Confidentiality Policy)

For example, there are safeguarding situations where we have a duty to break confidentiality. We will need to involve relevant organisations if we become aware of an abuse or neglect situation and the person at risk is:

- Under the age of 18 OR
- Any adult who fits our definition of a vulnerable adult OR
- Anyone disclosing that they are abusing a child or a vulnerable adult OR
- Any adult reporting a third party concern regarding a vulnerable adult or child at risk, including concerns of institutional abuse or domestic violence

NB: During the covid-19 crisis, any adult who we offer the Beacon remote befriending service to is classed as a vulnerable adult during this time.

If you disclose something to your befriender that they think could be a safeguarding concern, they will talk to you about this and ask your permission to discuss this with The Lighthouse's safeguarding officer. In some situations, they will be legally obliged to pass this information on and involve the relevant organisations.