

The Befriending Service

Birmingham Hospice's Befriending Service is here to support people living with a life-limiting illness socially and help them to create new friendships.

Who are we?

The team is led by a Befriending Coordinator and a colleague from the hospice, supported by a team of Volunteer Befrienders.

Our aim is to:

- Reduce social isolation and loneliness of people living with a long-term or life limiting illness.
- Bring people together to build support networks and friendships.
- Aid enablement, build resilience and independent living.
- Provide information, practical support, and signposting to services.
- Reduce the risk of hospital readmissions.

What services do we offer?

We offer three different types of befriending supported through trained volunteers. The type of service offered is led by patient choice and communication preferences.

Face-to-face befriending

A face-to-face service where our volunteer befrienders will meet with the person in the most suitable setting. Whether that may be at home or in a community space, and is subject to risk assessment and patient consent.

The service is often used to bring older and younger people together to share a two-way learning experience by building trust and respect between generations.

Telephone befriending

Telephone befriending is often facilitated by volunteers. Telephone befriending is a model used by the service to overcome barriers of mobility and access limitations, for those residing in more rural or remote environments or for those with mobility constraints.



The Befriending journey:

Next Steps

If you feel you could benefit from this service, ask your healthcare professional to refer you to the hospice Befriending Team by emailing:

hobs.social@nhs.net or completing a referral form from our website

www.birminghamhospice.org.uk

Once the referral is processed, the Befriender Coordinator will contact you. They will explain how the service is run, provide contact details and answer any questions.

They will complete an assessment for the service and carry out any necessary risk assessments around the regular home visits by a volunteer.

Using the information you give us they will match you with the most suitable volunteer to support your needs.

This process may take time, but the Befriending Coordinator will keep you updated at all stages. Once you have been allocated a volunteer we will arrange a meet-and-greet session for you both.

If you have any further questions, please contact Birmingham Hospice by calling 0121 269 5000 and a member of the team will be happy to help.

Group befriending

Group befriending provides patients with a shared interest or similar concern an opportunity to meet with one another on a regular basis in an informal and friendly environment. It provides opportunities to create peer networks with others able to offer support and advice based on shared or lived experiences.

Group befriending is facilitated by volunteers and usually takes place on a regular basis. It is frequently used to support individuals who face similar problems, for example, a specific health condition or similar interests.



Birmingham Hospice is the new name for Birmingham St Mary's Hospice and John Taylor Hospice.