

Summary of Ecas' Befriending Service

Criteria for having a Befriender

The Ecas Befriending Service provides its' service to isolated, physically disabled adults 18+, living in Edinburgh.

By isolated we mean people who are not currently receiving support to attend classes, access their community or participate in leisure activities or whose social life is limited due to their impairment, an example may be: limited or no visits from family or circle of friends.

Ecas follows the EHRC guideline that: "You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection."

However, please remember that Ecas only provides support to people who have a physical disability. We regret that the following conditions, on their own, do not meet our criteria: psychiatric disorders, learning difficulties, behavioural disorders, developmental delay, Down's syndrome, autism, visual or hearing impairment, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV and back pain.

General Befriending



Our volunteer Befrienders are from all walks of life – retired, students, able-bodied or disabled. Once linked with a 'Befriended', they visit them regularly (usually on a weekly basis) to keep them company, sit and chat, play games or help get them out and about.

Trips out can involve simply going along to a café for a cup of tea or a longer trip (up to 3 hrs) to go shopping for example.

Befrienders are **not** responsible for providing any kind of personal care or administering medication.



All of our volunteers are provided with complete training, including disability awareness, boundaries, confidentiality, communication techniques, safety and even wheelchair handling training if necessary. We also conduct enhanced disclosures and take up references for all our volunteers.

Our Befrienders and Befriendees are very carefully linked through a matching process which involves the Befriending Team getting to know both individuals well on a personal level and finding out exactly what they would like to achieve from the project. Similar interests, hobbies and character are always taking into account in the matching process.

Both Befriender and Befriendees are supported by the Befriending Team after the link and regular reviews are carried out with both parties to ensure everyone is happy with their situation.

Lunch buddies

Volunteer Befrienders who are limited on their private time can choose to be a 'lunch buddy'. This typically involves visiting their Befriendees during their lunch break for an hour once a week to enjoy their lunch together and have a chat. All training and support, as detailed above, is still provided.



Befrienders are **not** responsible for providing the Befriender's lunch in this situation, or for providing any personal support such as assistance with eating.

Facilitated Friendships

A 'facilitated friendship' involves 2 disabled people, possibly already known to each other, being supported to maintain (or begin a new friendship) as they have lost touch through housing or mobility issues. This situation may or may not involve the role of a volunteer Befriender depending on each individual case.

Where a Befriender is involved, **both** disabled people become Befriended of that person. The Befriender volunteer would visit each of them individually on a regular basis but also ensure that there is a visit "outside the home" once a month where all 3 parties get together.

Expenses covered by Ecas

Transport

All transport costs incurred by a volunteer Befriender in order to visit their Befriended will be paid for by Ecas.

Transport costs involved for a Facilitated Friendship will be covered by Ecas.

Refreshments

When outside the home on a befriending outing, the cost of refreshments can be claimed by the volunteer befriender up to £10 per calendar month. However, the Befriended would be expected to cover their own cost of refreshments.

Outings

Outings can be arranged by the Befriender & Befriended. Whilst some trips will have no costs, or minimal costs Ecas will normally assist with funding for 1 per month where additional costs are incurred. Each outing will be assessed on a case by case basis as to what expenses Ecas will cover. However, generally Ecas may pay for entrance fees and refreshments for up to £30 per volunteer per year.

Costs for carers/PAs

In some cases there will also be a need for a carer/PA to support an outing or to support a volunteer who is disabled. Each case is viewed individually, but in general Ecas will pay for support for an outing about once per month and fortnightly support for a volunteer if no other financial means are available to cover this.

For further information on Ecas' Befriending Service please contact:

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