

Call&Care

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First steps

Identifying someone or a core group to coordinate this project locally.

Call and Care Coordinators will be responsible to the leadership of the community organisation or Church.

Once the coordinators are in place, then there is a need to agree the boundaries of what is going to be offered and to whom.

It may be best to start with a limited group of volunteers and then to grow it.

There is a clear need to agree what is being offered and to progressively work through a list of people to contact.

What can be offered will depend considerably on the resources of the Church or community group but our vision is to keep the basic offering very simple.

Call and Care aims to meet the human need for social contact, offering a voice and someone to talk to.

So it simply requires the ability to call, to listen and to be there for others.

In a Church context, fellowship and limited pastoral care can also be offered over the telephone.

This can be done by anyone with sensitivity and a willingness to work within boundaries.

The parameters need to include:

1. What is on offer and what is not on offer and when to stop
2. An agreement as to what confidentiality means to the individual and the team in this context, including safeguarding.
3. Accountability and Responsibility
4. Support and Supervision

Now let's look at these one by one:

1. What is and what is not on offer

Call and Care is not designed to be counselling or therapy but instead it can range from a listening ear and a chance to offload with regard to life to an after church fellowship type of conversation.

Volunteers may feel they have to have answers, solutions and fixes for any problems that might be raised. This is not on offer, and volunteers need to be aware that they are not expected to do anything beyond listening in a caring way.

It is important for the person being called to feel that they matter and to be heard, but without there being expectations raised that there will be a knight in shining armour coming their way to rescue them.

2. Confidentiality and Safeguarding

Things will be said which will inevitably include personal information, and sometimes this will go beyond what would normally be shared in a community group or an after-church context.

The trust and privacy of the person needs to be respected and they need to be confident that the interaction is not going to have a negative effect on them locally.

However, there is also a need to ensure all safeguarding standards are upheld, and therefore any one acting on behalf of the community organisation or church needs to be fully aware of the safeguarding expectations and the limitations these put on the ability to keep confidences.

Volunteers need to be able to bring any safeguarding concerns to the Coordinators.

Good practice is that confidentiality is to a team with a clearly defined sense of who this includes and also what the safeguarding policies include.

3. Accountability and Responsibility

It is essential that there is a clear sense of acting on behalf of the community group or church and knowing where you fit as a volunteer, what you can do, and when it is essential to refer to someone else.

Whatever a person's background, in the context of listening every volunteer needs to have the same clear responsibility and accountability. This needs to be considered, agreed and laid out.

Doing this gives security to those participating and a safety net to all concerned.

No one should be allowed to feel that they are on their own coping with issues raised, or that they have any responsibility to resolve issues.

Additionally, no one should be allowed to carve out a role beyond the intended one. They must not act on their own behalf.

4. Support and Supervision

Each person needs to know where they can receive support for themselves as they participate in this work so that they are not left holding sensitive or difficult situations.

Support structures need to be clear whether there are planned supervision sessions or a support structure based on calling for support if and when needed.

The latter relies heavily on the individual making contact and also acknowledging need.

We recommend regular, pre-planned supervision sessions arranged by the local coordinator.

Working within the four parameters I have just described, a service can be offered to the people needing it where they can feel safe that there is a structure, and there is safeguarding and accountability.