



INFORMATION
for referring
A
gencies

It is not only possible for one human being to *make a REAL & LASTING difference* to another, it is often the *only thing* that ever does.

David Robinson Chair of the Council on Social Action



Information for referring agencies
Friendship Works

Who are we?

Friendship Works is the oldest youth mentoring charity in the UK. We provide long-term adult volunteer support to children aged between 5-16 who suffer a range of difficulties in their home life and could benefit from additional adult support.

We have worked in Camden and Islington for over 30 years, and now also provide services in Southwark.

Volunteers take a child on an outing most weekends for two years. These are planned to suit the needs of the child. Outings are simple and cover a range of activities like going to the park, cinema or swimming. We aim to set up long-term friendships and most go beyond the initial two years. Our oldest friendship is in its 28th year.

Our team of experienced caseworkers carry out family assessments, recruit and train volunteers, support the friendships with weekly phone calls and regular checks, and keep in touch with schools and agencies to ensure a joined-up approach.



Who do we support?

- Children must be in need of additional adult support in their life
- We take referrals for children from the age of 5-16
- Children must be from single-parent families
- Children must live in the Boroughs of Camden or Islington, or attend a school that we work with in Southwark (for information on who we work with in Southwark, please contact our casework team on **020 7485 0900** or look on our website in the 'Refer a child section')
- Both the child and parent must actively want to have a mentor through Friendship Works
- We do not take referrals for children who are in foster care, residential care, or other settings where the Local Authority has assumed responsibility for their care.

Making a referral

We take referrals from social services, schools, other charities and parents. There is a referral form to download on the 'Refer a child' section of our website.

You can refer more than one child in a family. Each child needs a separate form. The parent should be aware that you are making the referral and have agreed to it.

Please include as much information as possible on the family circumstances, with their permission. It really helps us to get a better idea of how a volunteer can fit in with the family dynamic. We also need to get an idea of the risks before we arrange a visit to the home.

It is useful for us if you can be specific about why you think the child would benefit from having a volunteer friend.

How does it work?



Once we receive a referral, a caseworker will contact you to discuss it, meet with the family at home, and then ask them to come into our offices so that we can find out more about what the needs of the child are and make sure that both the child and family understand the implications for them. Key issues are identified which are then tracked during subsequent review meetings.

A caseworker will meet separately with the child to talk to them about what they like doing, new things they might like to try and what kind of friend they are looking for. Then we consider which of the current volunteers would be best suited to the child's needs.

Prior to meeting for the first time the caseworker will discuss the 'match' with the volunteer and family and make sure both parties are happy to go ahead.

The child and volunteer will meet with a caseworker and make plans for initial outings. After this the volunteer will pick the child up from their home on a weekly basis to go out for a few hours. After each outing, the volunteer will have a supervision phone call with their caseworker.

Formal reviews are held after six months, after a year, and then every year as long as the friendship continues. At the review the child, parent and volunteer will all be interviewed by their caseworker and progress tracked.

We will keep you updated on the outcomes of review meetings, and informed on progress.

Child safety

The safety of the children we support is important to us. We make sure our volunteers can be completely trusted to take care of a child.

All potential volunteers fill out an application form which is assessed before deciding whether to invite them to an in-depth interview with two members of our casework team. If they are successful, they have two days of intensive training delivered by our team.

After this, if they are accepted as a probationary volunteer, we obtain three references and carry out an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check as well as a home visit before they can be officially accepted as a volunteer with us.

Once a child is matched, their mentor has a weekly telephone supervision with one of our caseworkers to monitor the friendship.



“I have been referring children to Friendship Works over a period of 10 years. Above all, Friendship Works offers children who are used to the disappointment of erratic relationships with adults, the chance of a dependable, rich experience.”

Shosh Morris, Counsellor, Montem and Thornhill Islington Primary Schools

“All children need reliable and consistent relationships in order to flourish and thrive. Feeling a strong connection to others is a basic human need through which children begin to realise their own potential.

“Friendship Works’ service is as simple as it is effective. Carefully trained and screened volunteers make a long-term commitment to support a child, building a strong relationship, widening horizons and being a positive role model.

“Children from vulnerable circumstances need sustained support, something which few services are able to offer. Friendship Works’ long-term approach is essential if these children are to benefit in a lasting and significant way.”

Dr Crispin Day, Head of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Research Unit at Kings College London, Head of Centre for Parent and Child Support at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

Get in touch

You can find more information and answers to common questions on our website at **www.friendshipworks.org.uk** or you can call us on **020 7485 0900** to talk to one of our caseworkers.

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