

REFERRAL GUIDELINES

What services does Archway offer?

Archway's overall remit is to alleviate the distress caused by loneliness and social isolation.

We do this by providing supportive social relationships through:

- Individual Support (by telephone)
- Individual Support (face-to-face)
- Small supportive social groups
- Invitations to occasional larger social events

These relationships provide a pathway of support to develop positive well-being, reduce isolation and encourage increased social contact both within Archway's own services and in the wider community. Most social contact roles within Archway are performed by volunteers who are trained to support people in Oxfordshire. Our groups are based in Oxford City and central Abingdon, but we are able to take referrals for Telephone and Face-to-Face Support from a wider area within the county.

We recognise that people who are referred to us may be feeling anxious, stressed, lonely and isolated for many different reasons. By working together, we support people to make steps towards achieving positive changes to their overall wellbeing.

How does it work?

A volunteer will have taken part in specific training around loneliness and its effects, the maintaining of professional boundaries, communication, mental health awareness, safeguarding, equality and wellbeing. The volunteer will listen with empathy and without offering advice.

An Individual Support Volunteer will contact the Friend (person who uses our service) – either by telephone or via a face-to-face home visit or meet-up – once every two weeks. The focus of contact is to allow the Friend to have a space to talk and be listened to, and to have affirmative and positive human contact.

The small supportive social groups are led by one or two members of staff and several volunteers. There is a high quota of one-to-one support within the group context and the average number of Friends in a group at any one time is 15. A Friend will be invited to attend a monthly group. The groups give an opportunity for Friends to meet with others, with activities to facilitate conversation. At these groups we aim to provide a space to enable Friends to experience a welcoming, safe and containing space, with a genuine human connection where people are listened to and are treated with dignity, and experience non-judgemental acceptance. The groups are an environment where people are encouraged in a timely way to move forward either within Archway or the wider community, as appropriate.

We value individual differences and work hard to ensure everyone has equal opportunities to the support on offer. Each Individual Support Friend is carefully matched with a volunteer, and those who attend groups are carefully observed to ensure compatibility with other group attendees.

Who can access Archway's services?

- Anyone 18 + living in Oxfordshire and experiencing loneliness and/or social isolation.* It is important that the person being referred identifies themselves as lonely or isolated.
- Anyone who is keen to develop social contacts
- Anyone who is ready to take active steps towards becoming less lonely and/or isolated

* Please note our groups are based in Oxford City and central Abingdon, but we are able to take referrals for Telephone and Face-to-Face Support from a wider area within the county.

REFERRAL CRITERIA

As a guideline we accept people who:

- self-identify as lonely and/or socially isolated.
- appear safe, after a risk assessment, for a volunteer to visit or meet, or to attend a group.
- live within Oxfordshire (there are some areas that may be harder to find volunteer links, however).
- are over 18 years old.

We may be unable to accept people who:

- are unable to form and maintain friendships due to, perhaps, the middle to late stages of dementia or other complex needs, unless we have especially skilled volunteers available.
- are unable to communicate with others.
- have no insight into their own mental health issues.
- cannot maintain the boundaries of appropriate conversation with a volunteer or other Friends.
- have medical conditions that would make it difficult for a volunteer to visit them (i.e. needing skilled and trained staff).
- have a strong social network already in place.

Our Volunteers and staff are not able to provide personal care. Friends may be unable to attend our activities if they are unable to mobilise independently or require help with personal care. Exceptions to this is if a carer attends with the Friend and can provide full assistance.

Please be mindful that this is a voluntary organisation and volunteers are trained to be good listeners and provide focused attention and quality time aiming to reduce loneliness and isolation. They are not specialists in mental health or physical health, or counsellors. They are not trained to give advice about benefits, housing etc. They will not assist with any medication or manual handling and they will not provide advocacy.

We do not provide volunteers to help with practical tasks such as cleaning, shopping, gardening or taking to appointments and under no circumstances do we provide financial assistance.

Archway staff are happy to research and provide signposting information to Friends for other appropriate services.

For all referring agencies - we are happy to attend team meetings or have discussions individually covering all aspects of our admissions and exclusion criteria. Please don't hesitate to get in touch.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Archway welcomes referrals from agencies such as health and social care workers, other voluntary organisations, family/friends and self-referrals. Consent **MUST** be given by the person being referred before an agency referral is submitted, and also in the case where family or friends are referring someone. All referrals must be made on the relevant referral form (Agency or Self) with all sections including equality data completed, and the risk and needs assessment fully completed.

Archway asks that both referrers and self-referrers keep Archway informed if there are any changes in circumstances after submitting an initial referral. In particular, changes which could compromise anyone's safety or which mean the referred person is no longer eligible to receive the service.

At Archway we refer to service users as 'Friends' and during the assessment process, we assess each potential Friend's level of need, personal expectations, eligibility according to our criteria, which service would be more appropriate, the risk to a volunteer in the Friend's home or meeting out (health and safety and lone working) or to members of a group. This assessment informs decision making as to what part of the pathway of support is most suitable. If appropriate, we may only offer group activities or one-off events depending on the outcome of the risk assessment.

Archway reserves the right to terminate a referral/assessment, or exclude a Friend from the scheme, should the circumstances demand it.

We endeavour to signpost all those we are unable to help, to more appropriate local services.

How can I get the support for myself or refer someone?

Anyone can be referred by themselves, by a family member, or friend. Any professionals (including GP's, Health Workers, Social Services, Social Prescribers, Local Area co-ordinators, Mental Health Workers) can refer as well as community or voluntary groups. Please complete the relevant referral form on our website, or ask us via emailing office@archwayfoundation.org.uk or phoning 01865 790552 to email or post one to you. Any Forms completed on the website can be submitted directly to us. Forms received by email or post can be emailed to office@archwayfoundation.org.uk or posted to The Archway Foundation, New Marston Pastoral Centre, Jack Straws Lane, Oxford, OX3 0DL. After the referral is received, you and the referred person will be contacted by the Senior Practitioner who will talk with you both in more detail about the referred person's needs and expectations, and what Archway can offer in terms of support. We will also contact, with consent of the referred person, any other agencies who have been or are currently involved in their support or care. We hope to be able to make contact within 2 – 3 weeks of receipt of the referral.

An assessment will be made either by telephone, a home visit or at one of the supportive social groups, or in a local café/public space dependent on the service being required and the situation of the referred person.

What makes a good referral?

Please **ONLY** refer people to Archway if they have consented for you to do so and are committed to making improvements to their situation through the support we offer. We would encourage you to consult with the person you are referring, about the referral being made and be clear about the expectation to commit to any offer of support. Please bear in mind that there are usually waiting lists in operation for all our services, especially the Individual Support (face-to-face) Service.

Prioritising

As a local charity with finite resources we are unfortunately unlikely to be able to offer a service to everyone who might benefit, and at times our services will be at capacity. Priority will be given to those living in the community with little, or no other local support. Individuals will be prioritised on need, not the time they may have been on our waiting list. Please indicate on your referral if the need is urgent and the reason for this.

Services not available

Archway's services are not a substitute for any other service and we will not accept referrals for ongoing intensive or long-term support that is properly the role of statutory or other agencies or services. We do not offer any form of personal care, a regular shopping service or transport for individual appointments. Services are only available for those who have been assessed by Archway and who have agreed to engage with us appropriately.

Relevant Information

It is important to note that although our volunteers and staff are here to support Friends emotionally, we are not a service that provides support in an immediate crisis. If you or someone you know needs support whilst in crisis, please:

Phone 999 – if you need URGENT help with any mental or physical health emergency

Phone 111 – to find out what support is available to you (service available 24 hours a day)

Phone Samaritans on 116 123 any time for free to speak to a trained volunteer who is there to listen and support you.

Text SHOUT anytime if you are in crisis on 85258 and a trained volunteer will contact you. (This is a free service available 24 hours a day).

Phone Safe Haven if you are in a mental health crisis and a trained volunteer will talk with you
01865 903037 Email: osh@oxfordshiremind.org.uk

Open: 11.30am – 9.30 pm, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

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