



BeFriends

One-to-One Befriending



Annual Report
2017

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REPORT FROM THE CONVENOR



BeFriends has risen to the challenge, not only have we achieved many points from our Strategic Plan, we have also finished the year more financially stable.

Our Service would not be able to support our young people without our volunteers who tirelessly give up their time. Through our 46 active volunteers our One-to-One Befriending Project has offered the support and friendship to 60 isolated, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people in the Dundee area.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank them and our staff members, Linda Smith and Wendy Hunter who are the driving forces behind the successful day-to-day operation of BeFriends.

In recent years we have seen an increase in referrals from Social Work, Health and Education this trend has continued in 2016-2017 with 51 new referrals being received.

We are in the process of researching and developing our expanded service to support children and young people up to the age of 25. This will help develop life skills and improve well-being of the individuals referred for support. Our plan is to secure funding and roll this programme out in 2018.

BeFriend's value base includes:

- Respect for individual differences, personal choice and the right to privacy.
- Recognise the capacity of individuals to effect real and lasting change in their lives.
- Acknowledge that society has responsibility to address the fundamental inequalities experienced by some of its members, through ill health, poverty and social exclusion.
- The benefits of working together with others who have an interest in the welfare of those we support.

As a learning organisation we provide practice learning placements for BA (Hons) & MSc Social Work students attending The University of Dundee and The Robert Gordon University. We also work with The University of Abertay by providing practice learning placements for their Business School and their Communities Module.

The Board has remained much the same this year, Susan Bruce staying on as an advisor with the welcome addition of Matt Allen. Existing Board members, Ivana Davidson, Grant Mulholland, Gordon Davidson, Harry McEwan and Kevin Todd have provided continuity to the Board. I would personally like to thank them for their time, effort and continued support.

With an exciting year ahead, including the move to new premises where our service will be more visible and accessible, I am looking to the future with great optimism and enthusiasm.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gordon Davidson".

Gordon Davidson

What We Do

We act as a resource for vulnerable/disadvantaged children aged 5-18 providing them with a One-to-One Befriending Service. Through support from befrienders and by participating in fun activities/experiences we:

- Make a positive change in the lives of the children and young people
- Raise the children and young people's aspirations and help them realise their full potential.
- Build upon the children's key skills and abilities helping them develop into confident and capable individuals.
- Enhance the children and young people's personal, social and communication skills
- Encourage the children and young people to take responsibility for their behaviour and actions and support them to make positive choices that can reshape their future.
- Increase the children and young people's participation in city wide and local activities

One-to-One Befriending offers the friendship and support of trained, vetted and disclosure checked adult volunteers to local children aged 5-18 years who have been referred because they are experiencing difficulties within their lives. The volunteers and children enjoy activities together once per week or once every two weeks. These outings as well as giving the children the opportunity to have fun and gain new experiences also give the children the chance to discuss any problems or difficulties they may be having.

The children and young people are referred for support for a broad range of reasons including Offending, Mental Health Issues, Bullying, Disability, Non Parental Care, Domestic Violence, Caring Responsibilities, Abuse, Neglect, Substance Misuse, Behavioural Problems, Low Self Esteem, School Issues, Child Protection/Supervision Orders, Bereavement etc.

Our Mission

Through volunteers, BeFriends will offer befriending support to disadvantaged local children and young people, developing their life skills and improving their well-being.

Our Key objectives are:

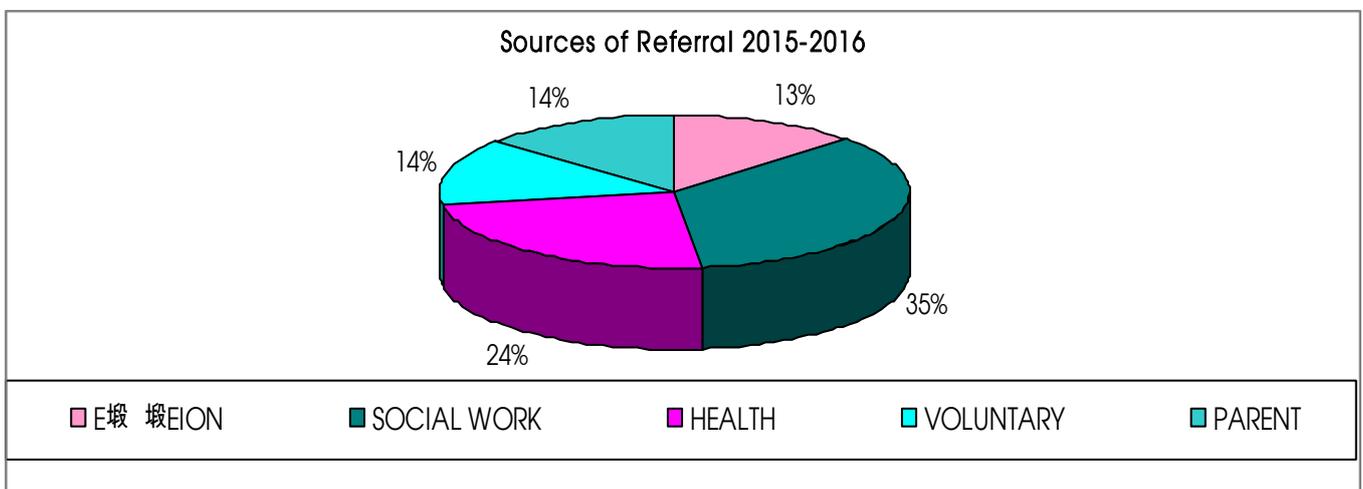
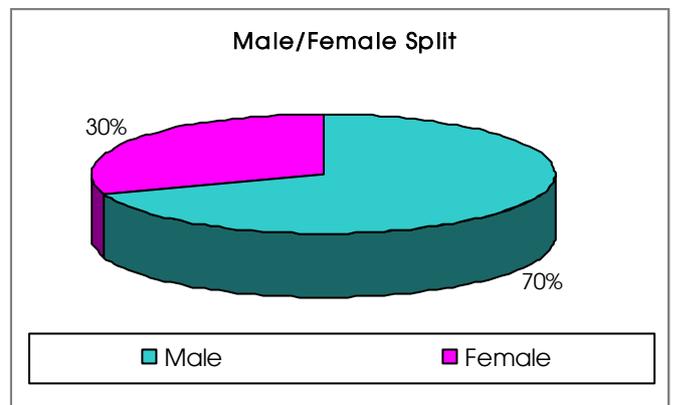
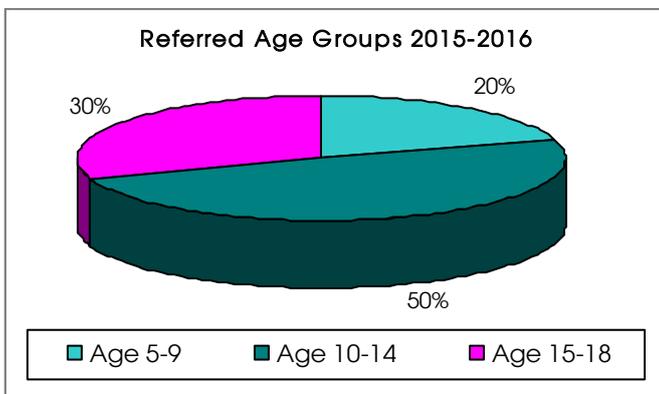
- Increase Confidence & Self Esteem
 - Decrease Social Isolation
- Build and Maintain Friendships and Relationships

STATISTICS

60 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED

51 NEW REFERRALS RECEIVED

129 TOTAL NUMBER OF REFERRED CHILDREN



The Children We Support

Olivia's Story

Olivia is 10 years old and she was referred for One-to-One Befriending by a School and Family Development worker based in her School. She was referred as she was significantly socially isolated she had poor attendance at school and did not participate in any social activities or clubs. At home Olivia would spend most of her time by herself in her bedroom playing on her games console she did not often talk to her parents or other family members. Olivia's mum suffers from a condition which leaves her confined mostly to her bed, this further impacted Olivia's opportunities to go out or participate in leisure or social opportunities.

Olivia was matched to Louise in October 2016 and from the start was overjoyed at having Louise as her befriender and fully engaged in the befriending support offered. In this relatively short time they have really built a fantastic befriending relationship and Louise has introduced Olivia to many new and fun experiences - in one report Louise wrote *"I took Olivia for her first ever trip to the beach on Monday - I definitely felt emotional when I had to explain to a 10 and a half year old what 'paddling' means. Was definitely a poignant reminder of the importance of the project"*.

Small steps towards decreasing Olivia's isolation have already been achieved through both the ongoing social outings with her volunteer as well as occasionally going out to play. Other improvements have also been reported including improved school attendance and increased positive interaction with peers.



62%

FEEL THEIR CONFIDENCE & SELF ESTEEM HAS IMPROVED SINCE RECEIVING SUPPORT

59%

FEEL LESS SOCIALLY ISOLATED SINCE RECEIVING SUPPORT

55%

FEEL THAT THEIR ABILITY TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN FRIENDSHIPS HAS IMPROVED SINCE RECEIVING SUPPORT

Our Volunteers

52

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER ENQUIRES RECEIVED IN YEAR

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER INTERVIEWED IN YEAR

45

20

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER RECRUITED IN YEAR

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVE VOLUNTEER IN YEAR

46

This year our volunteers have contributed more than 12,000 hours of volunteering with BeFriends. At least 11,500 of these hours have been spent directly with the children and young people.

On average each volunteer spends around **3 hours** per outing with their young person. Currently the average cost of each outing is **£13.39**, this includes travel, entrance fees and refreshments. When broken down into an hourly rate the cost per hour is a miniscule **£4.46** per hour (way below the national minimum wage/national living wage). These calculations prove that befriending is extremely cost effective and great value for money as if this work was to be carried out by a paid worker the costs involved would undoubtedly be very much higher.

Volunteer Spotlight

Kev, age 37

Befriending Since: January 2000

How did you hear about BeFriends:

"I was looking to volunteer with children so visited the Volunteer Centre and they put me in contact with Linda".

What made you get involved with BeFriends:

"I was looking to work with children and gain more experience in this area. I thought that it sounded like a really good project to get involved in".

What do you enjoy about befriending:

"Seeing the enjoyment and happiness in the young person's face and knowing that you are making a difference in their life. I also get to participate in activities that I would not otherwise do i.e. wrestling, circus etc".

What knowledge and experience have you gained volunteering with BeFriends:

"Befriending has opened my eyes to the fact that some children live in financial poverty where families struggle to get by on a daily basis. Others live in emotional poverty where financially they are stable and want for nothing but emotionally they get very little. BeFriends has offered me many opportunities in terms of training and information sessions which I have enjoyed and learned from".

Changes & Future Plans

We have recently carried out a review of the organisation focusing on everything from Governance to Service Delivery and have identified a few key changes. As a result of this review we have created a business plan that will help mould the future of our organisation over the next three years. We have also put into place a funding strategy that will facilitate these developments and changes as well as the core work that we already undertake.

A major change that has taken place is we have now re-launched under our new name "BeFriends". We have made this change as we feel that this new name is much more fitting with what we actually do, it will also fit within our future plans to expand our services to supporting up to 25 years olds. BeFriends will continue to offer the same much needed one-to-one befriending support to local children and young people and our aims and objectives remain unchanged.

In the Autumn BeFriends will be relocating to new premises in the Stobswell area of Dundee. Being shop fronted these premises although much smaller will give us an increased presence within the city as well as offering opportunities for partnership and collaborative working with the many other organisations that are already situated there.

A huge thank you to all our supporters, funders and hard working volunteers - you are what makes our work possible.

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