

Telephone assistance

Falmouth Age Concern have now set up a telephone befriending service to replace our face-to face visitor one. This service is being rolled out this week and a team of 40+ volunteers is in place and making calls to our clients. We also have a waiting list of around 20 new volunteers ready and able to help.

We are also planning to roll this service out to other older vulnerable people who are being referred to us in increasing numbers, including some from outside our area (roughly a nine mile radius of Falmouth) where there is an urgent or significant need. Clients are being phoned regularly - in some cases every day.

The primary purpose is to alleviate loneliness and anxiety through regular telephone contact but our volunteers are also acting as a signposting service so that if they identify a need that isn't being met (shopping, prescription collection, practical help etc) they can assist the person in need to get the right help from the right organisation.

Volunteer have been asked to use a 'three tier' procedure (self-referral where the client is given a number to call, volunteer referral where the volunteer accesses the right help and, finally, referral via the Falmouth Age Concern office where the need is complex). Client consent is always obtained to pass details on (phone, address etc). Our volunteers are all DBS checked and have been given a list of agencies from whom help can be obtained.

Falmouth Age Concern are working very hard to co-ordinate the massive (and very welcome) level of volunteer support that has been forthcoming and also to manage the increasing number of requests from the elderly and their friends and relatives. We are working closely with other organisations to help fulfil peoples' needs wherever possible.

If anyone knows of an elderly person who might need a telephone call for some emotional support, then please email us at falmouthbefriending@btinternet.com. For urgent enquiries call 01326 313620.