



Companions Policy

A framework to the Connectforce Companions project. This defines the role of the Companion, and how Companion should expect to be treated.

WHAT IS CONNECTFORCE COMPANIONS

Connectforce Companions is a project dedicated to ameliorating loneliness and social isolation in care homes. The project matches up companions and residents and is facilitated through the Connectforce team and care workers. The companion speaks to the resident via video-calling technology once a week for a 20 minute session over 8 weeks. The notion is the companion and resident will develop a personal connection over the time spent, with both benefiting from the interaction.

INTRODUCING BETTER IMPACT

Connectforce Companions uses Better Impact to manage and monitor this volunteer programme. Companions is a digital programme and so to make it efficient and enjoyable we have invested in an expansive digital software to onboard you. In your portal you will find all additional information about the programme, your resident companion and regular updates from the Connectforce team. Better Impact also has an app called *My Impact* if you wish to keep in touch via your phone.





Part of our basic training will include an introduction on how to: accept a chosen companion, log your hours and give feedback. We promise beyond this, you will need to know little else about the volunteer software. We want this experience to be positive and stress-free, and so if at any point you are struggling, please get in touch with us and we will walk you through it all.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

After completing the application form, a Connectforce team member will be in touch. They will introduce themselves as your Point of Contact (Poc) and go through the project with you. The objectives of volunteering, inputs and outputs are all discussed so everything is clear from the outset. Please make sure to ask any questions or raise any concerns during this point and familiarise yourself with all our policies and guidelines.

There will be a small amount of training to prepare you for your role. There will be an introductory webinar which will give an introduction to our topic of the week, how to communicate digitally with the elderly and how to report any safeguarding concerns. This is simply to help you feel comfortable and confident in your capabilities to be a Connectforce Companions!

Once completed, you will be ready to be matched to your resident companion to commence the 8 week scheme!

EXPENSES

Connectforce does not expect there to be any companion expenses to yourselves as this is an online project. We are not able to offer covering data costs for the sessions, and recommend finding spots with strong Wi-fi so not to incur any costs to yourselves. Please





reach out to your PoC if you have any expense related inquiry, and we will do our best to try to accommodate any obvious expenses. We don't want you out of pocket!

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

We will define appropriate standards of our services, to communicate them to you, and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them as part of your voluntary work.

We will provide a PoC who be in contact regularly to discuss your volunteering, your companion and any associated questions or problems. Your PoC will support your first Companion session, to ensure all parties are comfortable and happy to move forward.

Finally, we will do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us and to be flexible in how we use your volunteering.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your PoC will go through all health and safety concerns you might have before your call.

This is an online interaction, and we advise you to be seated somewhere quiet and comfortable so you can safely enjoy your video-call. Walking around whilst on the video-call could be dangerous, and we want your attention to be on your care home resident. Please protect your posture when you are seated. The video-call should not be longer than 20 minutes meaning you should not have to be seated for a long time. We recommend that you stand and move about after you finish your call.

Keep safe online by not revealing any personal information. Respect your privacy and that of the residents. Do not facilitate conversations outside of your allotted time with the resident. If you want to speak more than let you PoC know, and we will of course try to facilitate!





CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

We are committed to keeping you and your data safe, as well as that of the care home and resident. Therefore please remove your surname off the Zoom account before you start the session. Once the session starts you should make sure to lock the chat room after your resident joins.

Your personal information will be stored in Better Impact volunteer portal which ensures encrypted data storage and professional data protection. We pay a monthly subscription for this service to ensure that your data is handled securely and safely.

We will monitor and evaluate your feedback for purposes of improving our project, reporting to funders or writing to policy makers. However you will not be named, and the feedback will remain anonymous.

COMPLAINT/CONCERN PROCEDURES

If you have ANY complaint or concern either about your resident please reach out to your PoC. Connectforce can only help if we know. Your PoC will reach out to the care worker, and can reassign you to another resident or care home, if necessary. If you feel your resident is being abused by someone then it is your legal responsibility to report to your PoC.

If your complaint is about one of our Connectforce team members, please send a blank email to info@connectforce.community addressed *Confidential*. One of our other members of the team will be in touch with you shortly via email or telephone. We hope and expect this not to be the case (as our project leader for Companions is fabulous) but we want you to know the procedure is there!

All complaints or concerns will be dealt with anonymously unless stated otherwise.



