

**Access Criteria for Sandwell Together Befriending Service**

The Sandwell Together Befriending Service is designed to support individuals experiencing social isolation or loneliness. To access the service, applicants should meet the following criteria:

1. **Residency**
	* Must be a resident of the **Sandwell borough**.
2. **Social Needs**
	* Experiencing **loneliness, social isolation, or limited social contact**.
	* Would benefit from **regular, friendly telephone support or befriending**.
3. **Capacity to Engage**
	* Able to participate in **regular phone calls** with a volunteer.
	* Willing to engage in supportive conversation.
4. **Exclusions**
	* Individuals requiring urgent mental health intervention or other crisis support should contact appropriate services (e.g., NHS mental health support or emergency services).
	* The service is not a substitute for professional counselling, therapy, medical care, or social care.
	* Individuals exhibiting anti-social or aggressive behaviour.
5. **Referral & Self-Referral**
	* Open to self-referrals or referrals from family, friends, or partner agencies.
	* Referrals can be made via **phone, or preferably by online form** through Sandwell Advocacy.
6. **Termination of befriending relationship**
* At any time at the request of the Telephone Friend, the volunteer or Sandwell Advocacy.

**Objective:** To reduce social isolation, promote emotional wellbeing, and foster connections within the Sandwell community through consistent, supportive volunteer befriending.