**Helpful Skills and Experience for Volunteer Telephone Friends**

**1. Personal Qualities**

* **Empathy and compassion**: Ability to listen without judgment and show understanding.
* **Patience**: Especially when speaking with lonely, isolated, or vulnerable individuals.
* **Reliability**: Commitment to scheduled calls and maintaining regular contact.
* **Good communication skills**: Clear speaking voice, active listening, ability to hold a conversation.
* **Discretion and confidentiality**: Respect for the privacy of those they support.
* **Emotional resilience**: Capable of handling difficult or emotional conversations appropriately.
* **Respect and consideration for all individuals irrespective of their sex, race, religion, disability, age, sexuality or gender:** Ability to relate to people of different backgrounds and cultures

**2. Experience & Background**

* No formal qualifications required, with personal qualities being much more important.
* Life experience and maturity can be useful.
* Previous volunteer or support work experience may be useful but is not essential
* Ability to log call notes by email or telephone to the Volunteer Coordinator essential.

**3. Availability**

* Willing to commit at the outset to a regular calling schedule (e.g. one call per week) at a time to be pre-arranged with the telephone friend.

**4. Suitability Process**

* **Reference checks** (usually 2 character references).
* Completion of a **volunteer application form** and volunteer ‘welcome chat’.

**5. Training Requirements**

* Willingness to attend:
  + **Induction training** (covering safeguarding, confidentiality, active listening, boundaries in befriending relationships etc.).
  + **Ongoing training** as arranged.

**6. Support and Supervision**

* Willingness to attend:
* Supervision sessions with the Volunteer Coordinator as arranged.
* At least one of four annual Peer Support Group Meetings.