



engage

befriending

Impact Statement **2025**



Reducing isolation and loneliness by developing positive relationships and networks in the community.

At Engage Befriending we are passionate that every individual should have the opportunity to thrive no matter what season of life they are in. Loneliness and isolation are profound challenges faced by many older people in our community, often impacting mental and physical well-being. There are many reasons why someone might become isolated and lonely including bereavement; family issues; illness and physical limitations. We want to be there to help when these challenges arise and to ensure no one feels forgotten or alone. We connect older people with befriending opportunities and social activities, and work with other organisations to remove barriers to accessing support.

“shes a good listener, we can talk about quite a few subjects”

“I look forward to the day she visits”

“The scheme has saved my life. You have good get togethers. It’s all great”.

“I have someone to look forward to visiting me”.

Engage in numbers

162

SERVICE USERS:

81

VOLUNTEERS

3,888

VOLUNTEER HOURS

13

DROP-INS

138

PEOPLE POSTED OUR NEWSLETTER

172

Drop in and Christmas Party attendances



What we do

- **One-to-one befriending**, either in person or on the telephone. Providing a regular visit to look forward to and bring a smile.

“I’m really lucky, it’s been bingo from the start. Its brilliant”

“we get on really well”

- Some of our Engage Friends struggle to get out and about so our volunteers take them on **local outings** for a treat.

- We have a **connected** status, so those who don’t want a regular volunteer befriender can get a less frequent call to check all is ok and can access our other services.

- **Coffee mornings** provide a friendly environment to make new friends and feel part of community. We also invite our friends along to offer advice like the Remap and Citizens Advice energy team.

- **Monthly newsletter** highlighting local activities, new hobbies to try and a wordsearch which is particularly popular. It means when someone is unable to get out of the house they can still feel connected to community. It is also lovely to receive in the post rather than bills!

[View our latest newsletter here](#)

“I love the newsletter... when I have read it I share it with the other patients on the ward” (where she goes for regular treatment.)



- Our **Christmas Party** is now an annual event. Our volunteers provide transport so no one is left out and we have carol singing, quizzes and lots of cake!
- Regular email **news** sent to volunteers which highlights services locally they can connect their Engage friend to, and opportunities to access training.
- We have **partnerships** with Age UK Berkshire, Age UK Reading and Communicare, commissioned together by Reading Council to ensure our community ages well. We provide a range of activities between us including befriending, social clubs, information and advice. We also work with other local charities, health and social care professionals to identify older people who will benefit from our services and ensure they have access to support.

“We enjoy our varied conversations on a variety of topics and an hour and a half passes really quickly.”

Volunteering

Our volunteers are absolutely vital to the service we provide and do an amazing job.

[Hear two of our volunteers talking about what it's like to be a befriender here](#)

Whether visiting or phoning people, compiling and posting the newsletter or helping at our drop in, everyone makes a big difference. Our volunteers range in age, our oldest being 88.



2026

It's all about local people supporting one another. This year we will be recruiting more volunteers so that we can bring a smile to more people's faces.

To find out more, please use this link <https://engage-uk.org/get-involved/> or contact us on the details below.

Follow us:

 [search for Engage Befriending](#)

 [EngageBefriend](#)

 [engage_befriending](#)

"I have been visiting Maggie for two years now. She enjoys arguing with my SatNav on the way to the cafe or garden centre! We went for a carvery meal a few days before Christmas, which she really enjoyed, especially as she would be by herself on Christmas Day. Maggie also attended the Engage Christmas Party which she loved, especially Sheila's cake, and the singing"*

*Client name has been changed

engage-uk.org

Telephone: 0118 995 2102

Email: engage@themustardtree.org

Address: 4 Sackville Street, Reading, RG1 1NT

Engage Befriending is part of The Mustard Tree Foundation (Reading)
Company Ltd by Guarantee No. 4986086.
Registered in England, Charity No. 1104631.
Registered Charity Address: 4 Sackville St, Reading, RG1 1NT.



PART OF THE
Mustard Tree