



# Marmalade Trust

## Marmalade Connections Volunteer

### Role outline

As a Marmalade Connections Volunteer, you will support one or occasionally two of our project members (the people we support) for a period of up to 15 weeks. The role involves phoning a matched project member once a week for a friendly call lasting about 30 minutes **plus** researching potential social connections and activity opportunities to signpost the project member to.

You will receive training on how to build up a trusted telephone relationship with your project member(s) to enable you to support and signpost them to relevant services and activities. The aim of this project is to help reduce social isolation and loneliness and to support your project member(s) to discover lasting connections in their community.

### Our project members

Our Marmalade project members vary in age and ability, but all experience social isolation and/or loneliness. Many of them are of an older age, and, as such, may have health problems / mental health challenges or limited mobility, impacting on their ability to go outside. They will also have very different interests and needs in terms of the social connections and types of activities they would like to be involved in to help them feel less lonely. Our project members are currently referred from Bristol, South Glos, North Somerset, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire.

### Role criteria

You must:

- Be over 18
- Be happy to have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for vulnerable adults check (we can accept an existing check if within 2 years and in an equivalent role) and complete a photo ID check
- Be able to give two suitable references<sup>1</sup> for a reference check
- Be able to speak to a project member once per week for approximately 30 minutes (at an agreed time) for up to 15 weeks. Some matches will be shorter if connections are made easily.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note, references must not be from a relative - references should ideally be from a current or past employer or someone you have volunteered with previously.

- PLUS Be able to spend some time looking online / researching potential ideas to signpost your project member to
- Be able to attend two online training sessions – one before you start, and one part way through.
- Based in the Southwest of England - this is desirable but not essential.

Please note, this role will need you to be:

- **Friendly and respectful** – you may be the only person the project member is in contact with so a kind and understanding approach is essential.
- **A good listener** - project members may share personal details about their lives. An empathetic, patient approach, and the ability to help people identify their own needs by listening to what they are telling you, is really important.
- **Reliable** – it is important to build a relationship on trust by contacting the project member when you have agreed to do so. We understand this may not always be possible, but procedure should be followed to avoid this.
- **A good communicator** – you may have to have some difficult conversations with project members so strong communication skills are important.

### Commitment required (depending on application date)

#### Onboarding and starting off

- Complete a reference, DBS and photo ID check, unless you have a recent DBS
- Attend a zoom training session on what to expect, safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection
- You will be linked to a project member and sent their basic details. You can then call them to introduce yourself and discuss when you will have your weekly telephone conversations
- Telephone your project member once a week for a chat. Pre-arrange a time the week before, so that your project member knows when to expect your call.
- Complete Marmalade Trust forms with your project member around current barriers to social connections and to start capturing their ideas

#### Getting into more depth

- Attend an online training session on signposting and how to support your project member
- Once you have got to know your project member and attended the signposting training you will continue with weekly phone calls and start to

seek relevant organisations, activities, services, and events for your project member to take part in where they live, online (if they have access to the internet) or on the phone.

This could include:

- Meeting people
- Becoming more active
- Rekindling old hobbies
- Volunteering
- Learning something new
- Joining new social groups

### Progress and nearing the end

- Continue with weekly phone calls, focusing on identifying new opportunities for social contact and referring on. Depending when you get matched, calls will end around early/mid June or July 2025
- Feedback on calls to Volunteer Manager as required.
- Organise an accompanied visit to a new opportunity for the project member.... arranging to meet up, at a group, cafe, or other idea for social connection to support the project member with first visit nerves. This is optional but worked really well for some last year. N.B it does not involve going into the project members' homes.
- Complete your volunteer feedback form and end of project questions with your project member.

### What we offer

- You will be part of a project to connect people with their communities and make a difference to the lives of older people in Bristol and the surrounding counties.
- You will develop new skills through our training
- A volunteer handbook will be provided which will include full details of the role and guidance on telephone companionship, safeguarding and health and safety
- Volunteer Manager support where required and optional meet up.

If you have any queries about the roles please contact our Volunteer Manager, Helen Ker-Bridges, who will be happy to help!

**Email:** [Companions@marmaladetrust.org](mailto:Companions@marmaladetrust.org) | **Phone:** 07942 359343

**Volunteers are at the heart of our Marmalade family, and we could not do what we do without you!**